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## PORTRAIT OF THE ANTI-SEMITIC



JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

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# PORTRAIT OF THE ANTI-SEMITE

*translated by Erik de Mauny*

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# I

**I**F a man attributes all or part of his country's and his own misfortunes to the presence of Jewish elements in the community, and if he proposes to remedy this state of affairs either by depriving the Jews of certain of their rights, by debarring them from certain economic or social positions, by expelling them from the country, or by exterminating them wholesale, that man is said to hold anti-semitic *opinions*.

The word *opinion* makes one ponder. It is the word that the mistress of the house uses to put a stop to a discussion which threatens to become acrimonious. It suggests that one viewpoint is as good as another, it reassures, and makes thoughts sound inoffensive by identifying them with tastes. All tastes are found in nature, and all opinions are permissible: about such things as tastes, colours, opinions, there can be no dispute. In the name of democratic institutions, in the name of freedom of opinion, the anti-semitic claims the right to preach the anti-Jewish crusade far and wide. At the same time, accustomed as we Frenchmen have been since the Revolution to look upon everything in a spirit of analysis, that is to say as a composite whole which may be split up into its elements, we regard persons and characters as mosaics, of which each single stone co-exists with others without this co-existence affecting its inherent nature. Thus an anti-semitic opinion appears to us like a molecule capable of entering into combination, without undergoing change, with other molecules of whatever

description. A man can be a good husband and a kind father, a law-abiding citizen, a person of culture, a philanthropist, *and* at the same time an anti-semit. He may be a keen fisherman or an ardent lover, he may be tolerant where religion is concerned and full of generous notions on the condition of the natives of Central Africa, *and* at the same time detest the Jews. If he does not like them, it is said to be because his experience has shown them to him to be bad, because statistics have taught him they are dangerous, because certain historical factors have influenced his judgement. Thus his attitude seems to be the effect of external causes; and those who wish to study it may well neglect the personality of the anti-semit himself in order to concentrate on such things as the percentage of Jews called up in 1914, the percentage of Jews among bankers, industrialists, doctors, lawyers, or the history of the Jews in France since the earliest times. They will be able to reveal a purely objective situation determining a certain equally objective current of opinion which they will call anti-semitism, which they may plot on a graph or show in its variations between 1870 and 1944. In this way, anti-semitism appears to be both a subjective taste which enters into composition with other tastes in order to make up an individual person, and at the same time an impersonal and social phenomenon which can be expressed by figures and averages and which is conditioned by constant economic, historical and political factors.

I do not suggest that these two conceptions necessarily contradict one another. I do say that they are dangerous and false. I would admit, if need be, that one may have an opinion on the wine-producing policy of the govern-

ment, that is to say that one can decide, *for certain reasons*, either to approve or to condemn the unrestricted importation of Algerian wines; because here it is a question of giving an opinion on the administration of affairs. But I refuse to give the name of opinion to a doctrine which is aimed expressly at particular individuals and which tends either to suppress their rights or to exterminate them. The Jew at whom the anti-semitic wishes to strike is not an abstract figure defined solely according to his function, as under administrative law; by his status or by his actions, as under the Code. He is a Jew, the son of a Jew, recognisable by his physical appearance, by the colour of his hair, by his clothes perhaps and, it is said, by his character. Anti-semitism does not come within the category of ideas protected by the right to freedom of opinion.

Besides, it is a vastly different thing from an idea. It is, first and foremost, a *passion*. Doubtless, it may assume the guise of a theoretical proposition. The "moderate" anti-semitic is a courteous being, who will explain to you patiently: "Personally, I don't detest the Jews. I simply think it preferable, for this or that reason, that they should play a lesser part in the nation's activities." But a moment later, if you have gained his confidence, he will add rather more freely: "But there must be 'something', you know, about the Jews: I find their physical presence embarrassing." This argument, which I have heard a hundred times, is worth examining. In the first place, it arises from a logic based on the passions. Is it, after all, possible to imagine anyone saying seriously: "There must be something about tomatoes, because I can't bear to eat them"? But beyond that, the argument

shows us that anti-semitism, even in its most moderate or most sophisticated forms, remains a syncretic whole, which is expressed in an apparently reasonable fashion, but which can entail even physical changes. Some men are suddenly afflicted with impotence if they learn, from the woman with whom they are making love, that she is a Jewess. An aversion is felt for the Jew, just as with some people an aversion is felt for a Chinaman or a Negro. And it is not from the body that such a revulsion springs, since you can very well love a Jewess if you know nothing of her origin, rather it passes into the body from the mind: it is something to which heart and mind are committed, but in such a profound and total fashion that it extends to the physiological, as is the case with hysteria.

This committal does not arise from experience. I have questioned a hundred persons on the reasons for their anti-semitism. The majority confined themselves to enumerating the faults attributed by tradition to the Jews. "I dislike them because they are self-seeking, scheming, because they are persistent and oily, because they have no tact, etc." "But do you know many personally?" "Oh! I take good care not to!" A painter said to me: "I am opposed to the Jews because, with their habit of criticising everything, they encourage our servants to become disobedient." And here are some more precise examples. A young actor without talent alleged that the Jews have prevented him from having a career in the theatre by keeping him tied to inferior roles. A young woman told me: "I have had the most terrible row with a firm of furriers, they robbed me, and burned the fur I had entrusted to them. They were Jews, of course." But why did she choose, as object for her hatred, the

Jews rather than the furriers? Why also Jews or furriers in general, rather than a particular Jew, or a particular furrier? Simply because she already possessed a predisposition towards anti-semitism.

A colleague at the *lycée* tells me the Jews "get on his nerves" because of the thousand and one injustices which "Jew-ridden" social bodies commit in their favour. "A Jew was passed in the teachers' competitive examination the same year that I was turned down and you won't make me believe that that fellow, whose father came from Cracow or Lemberg, understood a poem of Ronsard, or a Virgil eclogue, better than I did." But he admits, at the same time, that he despises the teachers' examination, that it is "a useless grind", and that he did not do any work for it. To explain away his failure, therefore, he is armed with two ways of interpretation, like those madmen who, when their delusion is in full spate, allege that they are the king of Hungary, but who, if you question them brusquely, admit to being shoemakers. He is able to think on two planes, without this causing him the slightest uneasiness. Going one better, he will on occasion justify his past laziness by saying that it would really be too stupid anyway to cram for an exam in which Jews are passed in preference to good Frenchmen. As it happens, he came twenty-seventh on the final list. There were twenty-six in front of him, twelve who were passed and fourteen who were failed. If the Jews had been excluded from taking the examination, would his position have been any better? And even if he had topped the list of the unsuccessful candidates, and if, by the elimination of one of the successful candidates, he had had his chance of being passed, why should Weil, the Jew, have been failed

rather than Mathieu, the Norman, or Arzell, the Breton? In order to feel the resentment he did, my colleague had to have adopted in advance a certain notion of the Jew, of his nature, and of his role in society. And to be able to decide that, among twenty-six competitors more fortunate than himself, it was the Jew who had robbed him of his place, he had to have given *a priori* preference, in the ordering of his life, to reasonings based on passions. Far from experience giving rise to the concept of the Jew, it is this concept which is used to interpret experience; if the Jew did not exist, the anti-semitic would invent him.

That may be so, you will say, but if experience cannot be invoked, at least it must surely be admitted that there are certain historical bases to explain anti-semitism. It is not, after all, something that has been conjured out of thin air. I could very easily retort that the history of France teaches us nothing about the Jews: they were oppressed up to 1789; and since then, they have played a part as best they could in the life of the nation, taking advantage, to be sure, of freedom of competition to supplant those weaker than themselves, but neither more nor less than other Frenchmen: they have committed no crime against France, nor in any way betrayed her. And if anyone asserts that he has proved that the proportion of Jewish soldiers in 1914 was lower than it should have been, that merely shows that he has been moved by curiosity to consult statistics, for it is not one of those things which force themselves automatically on our attention. It does not occur to a fighting man to feel astonishment at not seeing any Israelites in the narrow sector which is all he sees of the front.

But since, after all, whatever light history may throw on the role of Israel depends essentially on what notions one has about Israel, it seems to me better to examine an obvious instance of "Jewish betrayal" in a foreign country, and determine what repercussions this "betrayal" may have had on contemporary anti-semitism.

During the bloody Polish uprisings of the nineteenth century, the Jews of Warsaw, whom the tsars treated indulgently for political motives, were very lukewarm in their attitude to the insurgents; thus, having taken no part in the insurrections, they were able to maintain and even expand the scope of their dealings in a country ruined by a repressive rule. Whether or not this is a fact I cannot say. But what is certain is that many Poles believe it, and this "historical evidence" plays no small part in prejudicing them against the Jews. If, however, I look into this matter more closely, I discover a vicious circle: the tsars, we are told, at the same time as they adopted a relatively benevolent attitude towards the Jews of Poland, ordered pogroms against the Jews of Russia without a qualm. The cause underlying these so disparate actions was the same: the Russian Government considered the Jews unassimilable, both in Russia and Poland, and merely following the dictates of policy, ordered them to be massacred in Moscow or Kiev because they threatened to weaken the Muscovite empire; while it encouraged them in Warsaw in order to stir up dissension among the Poles. The Poles themselves showed nothing but hatred and contempt for the Jews in their own country, but here again the reason was the same: in their eyes, Israel could never become an integral part of the

community. Treated as Jews by the tsar, as Jews by the Poles, possessing, in spite of themselves, their own Jewish interests in the midst of a foreign community, it is scarcely surprising that this minority behaved in a way conforming to the conception held of them.

In other words, the essential thing in this case is not the "historical evidence", but the preconception of the Jew existing in the minds of those who dictated that chapter of history. And when Poles to-day bear Jews a grudge for their past behaviour, they are motivated by the same idea: but to think, in the first place, of blaming the third generation for the faults of its grandparents indicates an extremely primitive conception of what constitutes responsibility. Even that does not explain the attitude: one must in addition have formed a certain conception of what the children are from what the grandparents were; one must be persuaded that what the older generations did the younger ones are capable of doing; one must be persuaded equally that the Jewish character is inherited. So the Poles in 1940 treated the Israelites as *Jews* because their ancestors in 1848 had treated the Jews of their generation in the same way. And it is not unlikely that, in other circumstances, this traditional attitude towards them might have induced the Jews of to-day to act in the same way as those of 1848.

It is thus the *idea* one has of the Jew which seems to determine history, and not "historical evidence" which gives rise to the idea. There is also a good deal of talk of "social evidence", but when we examine the matter, we find the same vicious circle: there are too many Jewish lawyers, we are told. But does anyone complain that there are too many Norman lawyers? Even if every

Breton took up medicine, surely one would confine oneself to saying, "Brittany supplies the whole of France with doctors." But wait, someone will object, that is not at all the same thing. Doubtless, but the point in question is precisely this, that we regard Normans as Normans, and Jews as Jews. Thus, from whatever aspect we view the matter, the essential thing seems to be the *concept of Jew*.

It becomes clear, therefore, that no external factor can instil anti-semitism in the anti-semitic. Anti-semitism is something adopted of one's own free will and involving the whole of one's outlook, a philosophy of life brought to bear not only on Jews, but on all men in general, on history and society; it is both an emotional state and a way of looking at the world. Of course, in any given anti-semitic, some tendencies will stand out more than others. But they are always simultaneously present all together, and are governed by one another. It is this syncretic whole which we must now attempt to describe.

I said earlier that anti-semitism emerges as a passion. Everyone can see that at the root of the ailment lies hatred or anger. But in the ordinary way, hatred or anger are *provoked by something*: I may, for example hate someone who causes me suffering, insults me, or wounds my pride. We have just seen that the passion felt by the anti-semitic must be of a quite different order: it not only anticipates those facts which might be expected to give rise to it, but seeks them out in order to feed upon them, and even then must interpret them in arbitrary fashion in order to find them really offensive. And yet, if you merely mention a Jew to an anti-semitic, he shows all the symptoms of the liveliest irritation. If, at this point, we

remember that in order to show anger over something, we must always first *allow* that anger to arise in us (we speak, for instance, of a person "working himself up" into a rage), it must be agreed that the anti-semitic has *chosen* to let his life be dominated by his particular passion. A good many people, it is true, prefer to let their lives be ruled by passion rather than by reason. But in this case, their passion is inspired by certain *objects*: women, fame, power, or money. Since the anti-semitic has chosen hatred, we are forced to conclude that it is the state of being in a passion that he cherishes.

This is a form of sickness which in the ordinary way earns little sympathy: if a man is suddenly filled with a passionate desire for a woman, he feels that desire because of the woman and in spite of the passion: we mistrust arguments based on passion, whose only aim is to enforce, by all possible means, opinions which love, jealousy or hatred have inspired; we mistrust the excesses of passion just as we mistrust the person with a one-track mind. This, however, is the very mentality the anti-semitic chooses to adopt. How can anyone choose to reason falsely? It is simply the old yearning for impermeability. The sensible man groans as he seeks for the truth, he knows that his reasonings are only tentative, that fresh considerations will arise to throw doubt upon them; he is never very sure of what he is aiming at; he is "vulnerable", he may seem uncertain of himself. But there are people who are attracted by the permanence of stone. They would like to be solid and impenetrable, they do not want to change: for who knows what the change might bring? This attitude arises from an original fear of self, and from fear of truth. And what frightens them is not

the substance of truth, which they do not even suspect, but the outward form of truth, which is an object which can only be approximately defined. It is as if their own existence were perpetually in suspense. But they want to exist in all ways at once and all in one instant. They have no wish to acquire ideas, they want them to be innate; and as they are afraid of reasoning, they want to adopt a mode of life in which reasoning and the quest for truth play only a subordinate part, in which nothing is sought except what has already been found, in which one never becomes anything else but what one already was. This is exactly the way passion works. Only a strong emotional prejudice can induce such blind certainty, and keep the power of reason fettered, only this prejudice can remain impervious to experience and survive through a whole lifetime. The anti-semitic has chosen hatred because hatred is a faith; and in the first place, he has chosen to devalue words and meanings. Having done that, he immediately feels reassured. How trivial and futile now appears to him any discussion on the rights of the Jew: from the outset he has placed himself in a different world. If he condescends, out of pure courtesy, to defend his point of view for a moment, he merely lends his attention but gives nothing of himself: he simply tries to project his intuitive certainty into the framework of the conversation.

I quoted, a little earlier, some of the typical phrases used by anti-semites, all equally absurd: "I hate the Jews because they encourage disobedience among our servants, because a Jewish furrier robbed me . . ." and so on. Do not think that these anti-semites are altogether unaware of the absurdity of their answers. They know

that what they have said is trivial and open to dispute; but they find it amusing, and after all it is their opponent who must treat words seriously, since he believes in words; the anti-semites are *entitled* to treat the matter as a joke. They even like to play with their replies, since by producing farcical reasons, they discredit the serious intention of their questioner; they find delight in exercising their ill faith, because their purpose is not to persuade with sound arguments but to intimidate or disconcert. If you insist too keenly, they are silent, or intimate in a lofty manner that the time for arguing the point is over. They are not afraid of being proved wrong, but merely of being made to appear ridiculous; or afraid that their embarrassment will create a bad impression on some third person whom they wish to draw over to their side.

If, therefore, the anti-semitic is, as we have seen, impervious both to reason and experience, that does not in itself indicate a firm belief; the firmness of his belief arises rather from his choosing to make himself impervious.

He has chosen also to be intimidating. People are afraid of vexing him. No one knows to what extremes he may fly if his passion is provoked—no one, except himself: for in reality, his passion is not provoked by external causes. He is perfectly well aware of it, and can let himself go just as far as he wants and no further, slackening or tightening his grip on the reins. He is not afraid of himself: but in the eyes of others he sees the reflection of his own disquieting image, and he suits his arguments and his gestures to fit the image. Having an external model to go by, he has no need to seek out

his own personality within himself; he has chosen to live entirely as an extrovert, never to look into himself, to be nothing but the fear he inspires in others: even more than from the power of reason, he tries to flee from his intimate awareness of his own self. But what, you may ask, if he behaved like that only where Jews were concerned? If, in all his other actions, he showed perfect good sense? My reply to that, bluntly, is—that it is impossible. Take the case of a certain fishmonger who, in 1942, exasperated by the competition he had to put up with from two Jewish fishmongers, who were keeping their origin secret, seized pen and paper one day and denounced them. From everything else I have heard of him he was mild and genial, the most dutiful son in the world. But I do not believe it. A man who finds it quite natural to denounce other men cannot share our conception of humanity; even those to whom he does good he must view in a quite different light from our own; his generosity, his kindness, is of a different brand from our kindness, our generosity. A passion cannot be abstracted and localised.

The anti-semit willingly admits that the Jew is intelligent and hard-working; he may even acknowledge his own inferiority in this respect. Such a concession costs him little: he has put these virtues, as it were, in parenthesis. Or rather, their value depends on the person who possesses them: where the Jew is concerned, the more virtues he has, the more dangerous he is. The anti-semit cherishes no illusions about himself. He regards himself as an average man, as a representative of the common mean, and basically of the mediocre: one does not find instances of an anti-semit claiming individual

superiority over the Jews. But it must not be thought that he is ashamed of his mediocrity: on the contrary, he vaunts it: for he has in fact chosen it. Such a man dreads every kind of solitude, that of the genius as much as that of the murderer: he is the man of the crowd, and no matter how insignificant his stature, he takes the precaution of stooping lower for fear of emerging above the herd and coming face to face with himself. If he has become anti-semitic, it is because that is something one cannot become alone. The expression, "I hate the Jews", is something one always says in front of others: and in uttering the words, one affirms one's link with a tradition and a community whose hallmark is mediocrity.

It may be pointed out at this juncture that to have accepted mediocrity does not mean to be humble, or even modest. Exactly the opposite, in fact. The mediocre have their own passionate pride, and anti-semitism is an attempt to give value to mediocrity for its own sake, to create an élite of the mediocre. Intelligence, for the anti-semitic, is a Jewish attribute, hence he is free to despise it to his heart's content, as he is free to despise all the other virtues the Jew may possess: these are ersatz qualities which the Jews use in place of the balanced mediocrity which they will always lack. The true Frenchman, with his roots deep down in his own country, in his own small locality, sustained by a tradition of twenty centuries, benefiting from an ancestral wisdom and guided by tried and tested custom, does not *need* to be intelligent. What merit he has is founded on the assimilation of those qualities with which the things around him have been endowed by the labour of

innumerable generations, and hence it is a merit arising from ownership.

But what he owns, it goes without saying, is inherited property, and not property that can be bought. The anti-semit fails totally to understand the principles underlying different forms of modern property, i.e. stocks and shares, and so on. These are abstractions, mental entities which are connected with the abstract intelligence of the semite: a share certificate, since it may belong to anyone, belongs to no one, and moreover, it is a sign of wealth but not a concrete possession. The anti-semit can conceive of only one type of acquisition—primitive land ownership—based on a truly magical relationship with possession, in which the thing possessed and its possessor are united by a bond of mystical participation: he is the poet of real estate. Ownership of land transfigures the owner, and endows him with a particular and concrete perceptiveness. It is not, of course, a perceptiveness concerned with eternal truths or universal values: the universal is Jewish, since it is the object of intelligence. What this subtle perceptiveness can grasp is, on the other hand, that to which intelligence is blind. In other words, anti-semitism is based on the principle that concrete possession of a particular object grants in mystic fashion the perception that goes with that object. Maurras has said as much, in affirming that a Jew will never be able to understand the line of Racine:

*Dans l'Orient désert, quel devint mon ennui.*

(Bérénice)

Why should *I*, the mediocre *I*, be able to understand that which the most subtle and cultivated intelligence

has failed to grasp? It is because Racine belongs to me. Racine and my own language and my own soil. It may be that the Jew speaks purer French than I do, he may know its syntax and its grammar better, he may even be a writer —all that is of no account. It is a language he has been speaking only for a decade or so, whereas I have used it for a thousand years. His purity of style is something abstract, something acquired: my errors of French are consistent with the genius of the language. That is of course the same argument that Barrès used against the stockbrokers. What is there surprising about that? Are not the Jews the brokers of the nation? They are allowed to have all that intelligence or money can acquire: but the net result is insubstantial as air. Only irrational values count, and it is precisely these which are for ever withheld from them. Thus at the very outset the anti-semitic subscribes to an irrationalism of fact. When he contrasts himself with the Jew, it is as the embodiment of feeling against intelligence, of the particular against the universal, of the past against the present, of the concrete against the abstract, of the possessor of landed estate against the possessor of transferable securities.

It need only be added that many anti-semites, perhaps the majority, come from the lower middle class of the towns: Government clerks, office workers, petty businessmen who possess nothing. It is in the very act of ranging themselves against the Jew that they become aware of being possessors: in drawing the portrait of the Israelite as a thief, they place themselves in the enviable position of people who possess something worth stealing: the notion that the Jews want to seize France confirms their own possession of France. They have elected to be anti-

semitic because that is one way of making valid their claim to possession. If the Jew has more money than they, so much the better: that simply means that money is a Jewish thing and as open to contempt as intelligence. That they may also be less well off than some country squire from Périgord or a prosperous farmer from Beauce does not worry them. They have only to vent their vengeful wrath on the Jewish thieves in order to be aware of the presence of the whole of their native land. Staunch and true Frenchmen are all equal, because each one of them possesses France undividedly in himself. For this reason, anti-semitism is a form of poor man's snobbery. As for the rich, they are more likely to utilise anti-semitic passion than to abandon themselves to it: they have better things to do than to let it absorb them. And if it spreads most widely among the middle classes, it is precisely because these classes possess neither estates nor country houses, but only bonds or money in the bank. The lower middle class in Germany in 1925 was not anti-semitic by accident. Made up of "white collar" workers, such a class was principally concerned with maintaining its genteel fiction against the true proletariat. Ruined by heavy industry, scoffed at by the Junkers, it was nevertheless to the great industrialists and the Junkers that it gave its whole-hearted allegiance. It took to anti-semitism with the same fervour that it showed in maintaining genteel pretensions of dress: because the workers, on the one hand, were internationalists, and because the Junkers, on the other, owned Germany—which was just what they wanted to do.

Anti-semitism does not mean simply the joy of hating: it provides its positive pleasures as well: by

treating the Jew as a pernicious and inferior being, one automatically implies that one belongs to an élite. And such an élite, differing vastly from other contemporary ones based on merit or work, resembles from every aspect an aristocracy of birth. I do not need to do anything to earn my superiority, and there is equally no way in which I can forfeit it. It is granted once and for all: it is a *thing*.

This precedence based on principle must not be confused with true worth. The anti-semitic is not so particularly anxious to have true worth. It must be sought out in the same way as truth, and can be discovered only with difficulty; it must be deserved, and even when acquired, it remains perpetually open to challenge: one blunder, one mistake, and it is lost: and throughout our life, we bear ceaseless responsibility for our own worth. The anti-semitic flees responsibility as he flees his own conscience: and having elected to harden his personality in a mineral permanence, he bases his moral outlook on a scale of petrified values. Whatever he does, he knows that he will remain at the top of the ladder: while the Jew, whatever *he* does, can never mount above the first rung. The significance of the choice the anti-semitic makes in his own life now becomes clearer: he chooses the irremediable through fear of his own freedom, and mediocrity through fear of solitude. And out of pride, from this irremediable mediocrity, he creates a rigid aristocracy.

For these diverse manoeuvres, the presence of the Jew is an imperative necessity. To whom else could he be superior? Better still, it is in opposition to the Jew, and to the Jew alone, that he realises the legality of his own

existence. If by some miracle—and as he would like it to happen—all the Israelites were exterminated, he would still be a hotel porter or a shopkeeper in a strongly hierarchical society where the title of "true Frenchman" would cease to have any value since it would belong to all and sundry, he would lose the sense of having a right to his country since no one would any longer contest it, and the profound feeling of equality uniting him with the highborn and wealthy would vanish in a flash, being essentially a negative thing. The set-backs he had hitherto attributed to the unfair competition of the Jews would now have urgently to be ascribed to some other cause: and if he paused to look into himself, he would probably give way to bitterness, to a brooding hatred of the privileged classes. So the anti-semit finds himself in the unfortunate predicament of vitally needing the enemy he wishes to destroy.

The egalitarian spirit which the anti-semit cultivates with such zeal has nothing in common with the equality officially sponsored in the programme of the democracies. This equality must be achieved in a society based on an economic hierarchy, and must remain compatible with a diversity of functions. But it is *in opposition* to this hierarchy of functions or office that the anti-semit claims the equality of all Aryans. He understands nothing of the division of labour, and cares less: for him, if each citizen can claim the title of Frenchman, it is not because, in his own station and at his own job, he co-operates with all the others in the economic, social and cultural life of the nation; but because he has, in the same way as each of the others, an unshakeable and innate right over the country as a whole.

Thus the society conceived by the anti-semitic is a society of juxtaposition, as we have already had reason to suspect, since his ideal conception of property is real estate. And as, in fact, there are many anti-semites, each one of them helps to build, within the framework of organised society, a community which presents a mechanical unity of front. The degree of integration of each anti-semitic within this community, as well as the exact shade of his egalitarian sentiment, is determined by what I shall call the temperature of the community. Proust has shown us, for example, how anti-Dreyfus feeling brought the duke and his coachman together, how, through a shared hatred of Dreyfus, bourgeois families managed to climb into the aristocracy. The egalitarian community to whose authority the anti-semitic appeals is of the same type as those crowds or spontaneous movements which appear at the moment of a lynching or a public scandal. Equality in such instances comes from an absence of discrimination of function. Anger is the tie that binds them together; and such collective groups have no other aim than to impose upon certain individuals a far-reaching repressive sanction: the collective impulse, the collective protest, are indulged in all the more vehemently by particular individuals, since no one of them is restrained by a specialised function. In this way, individuals sink themselves in the crowd; the modes of thought and the reactions of the group remain on the most primitive level. Admittedly, such groups do not arise from anti-semitism alone: a riot, a crime, a miscarriage of justice, may lead to their sudden appearance. But such groups are of the most ephemeral type, and soon dissolve again without

leaving a trace. As anti-semitism survives through successive waves of hatred against the Jews, the community of anti-semites remains in a latent condition during normal periods, and every anti-semitic appeal appeals to its authority. Incapable of understanding the organisation of modern society, he longs for those times of crisis when the primitive community suddenly reappears and attains its point of fusion. He wants his personality to be suddenly submerged in the group and carried along on the collective flood. It is just this pogrom atmosphere he is thinking of when he demands the "union of all Frenchmen".

In this sense, anti-semitism in a democracy is a sly version of what is ordinarily known as the struggle of the common citizen against authority. Question any one of those youthful troublemakers who calmly break the law, and band together to beat up a Jew in a deserted street: he will tell you that what he wants is a powerful authority which would absolve him from the odious responsibility of thinking for himself: and as the authority of the Republic is weak, he is led into indiscipline through love of obedience. But is it really a powerful authority that he wants? What he is really demanding is rigorous order for other people, and for himself complete freedom to indulge his own irresponsibility. He wants to place himself above the law, while at the same time escaping from the knowledge of his own freedom and his own solitude. He resorts to a subterfuge: Jews take part in the elections, there are Jews in the government, therefore the legally constituted authority is corrupt at its foundations: even more, it is non-existent and one may therefore quite legitimately take no notice

of whatever it may decree: which cannot even be called disobedience, since one cannot disobey something that does not exist.

So for the anti-semitic, there is a *real* France, and a *real* government, although a diffuse one lacking specific attributes, and another France, the abstract, official, Jew-ridden France, against which it is fitting to rise in protest. Naturally, this permanent rebellion is the work of a group as a whole: the anti-semitic is never able to act or think alone. And this group in turn is incapable of regarding itself as a normal minority party, because a party is obliged to arrange a programme and determine upon a political line, all of which implies initiative, responsibility, freedom. Anti-semitic associations want neither to arrange a line of action nor to assume responsibility. They would regard the idea of coming forward as a definite section of French public opinion with horror, for that would mean creating a platform and finding legal means of acting. They prefer to represent themselves as expressing, in all purity and in all passivity, the feeling of the *real* France, one and indivisible.

Every anti-semitic is therefore, in varying degree, the enemy of regular authority, and wishes to be the disciplined member of an undisciplined group. He is passionately fond of order, but it must be *social* order. It might, in fact, be said that he wishes to disrupt the political order so as to restore the social order, the social order being in his eyes a primitive and egalitarian society of juxtaposition and of heightened temperature from which the Jews will be excluded. Going on these principles, he enjoys a strange sort of independence,

which I will call an inverted liberty. For authentic liberty recognises its responsibilities, while the anti-semitic's liberty comes from the fact that he flees all responsibility. Hovering between an authoritarian society which does not yet exist and an official and tolerant society which he rejects, he can do just as he likes without fear of being labelled an anarchist, which would fill him with horror. The underlying seriousness of his aims, which it is beyond the scope of words or actions to express, allows him to appear frivolous. He may play practical jokes and be "one of the boys", he may beat and rob and persecute —his motive is always sound. With a strong government, anti-semitism decreases, unless it is part of the actual government programme. But in this case, its whole nature is changed. Although he is an enemy of the Jews, the anti-semitic has need of them; although he is anti-democratic, he is a natural product of democracies, and can only emerge within their framework.

Now we begin to realise that anti-semitism is not simply a "matter of opinion", and that the anti-semitic attitude involves the whole of the personality. But we have not finished with him yet: for he does not confine himself to laying down the broad lines of political and moral conduct; he is in himself a process of thought and a conception of the world. No one, in fact, could assert the things that he asserts without implicitly accepting certain intellectual principles. The Jew, he says, is wholly bad, wholly Jewish; his virtues, if he has any, are transformed into vices from the very fact that they are his, and whatever labour his hands do must necessarily bear his imprint: so that if he builds a bridge, the bridge is no good, being Jewish, from the first span to the last.

The same action carried out by a Jew and a Christian has a different meaning in each case, and the Jew communicates to everything he handles something execrable and vile. The swimming baths were the first places the Germans closed to the Jews, since they thought that the body of a Jew taking a swim would render the bath wholly unclean. Literally, the Jew infects everything, even the air that he breathes.

Now, if we try to formulate in abstract terms the principle to which we are referring, it comes down to this: the whole is greater than, and different from, the sum of the parts; the whole determines the meaning and the fundamental nature of the parts of which it is composed. There is not merely *one* virtue of courage which may be present equally well in the character of a Jew or of a Christian, as oxygen indifferently compounded with nitrogen and argon makes up air, and with hydrogen, water; but each individual is an irresolvable whole, with his own courage, his own generosity, his own way of thinking, of laughing, of eating and of drinking. What does this imply, if not that the anti-semitic has chosen, in order to understand the world, to have recourse to the spirit of synthesis? It is the spirit of synthesis which allows him to think of himself as forming an indissoluble unity with France as a whole. In the name of the spirit of synthesis he decries the purely analytical and critical intelligence of the Jews. But we must look at the matter in more detail: for some time past, from the Right and the Left, from traditionalists and socialists alike, the appeal has been made to the principles of synthesis against the spirit of analysis which held sway when the foundations of

bourgeois democracy were laid. The same principles can hardly operate on both sides, or at least, both sides employ these principles in a different fashion. How does the anti-semitic employ them?

One finds little anti-semitism among the working class. That, one might say, is because it contains no Jews. But such an explanation is ridiculous. On the contrary, supposing the alleged fact were true, the workers should complain of their absence. The Nazis recognised this quite well, and when they wanted to extend their propaganda to the proletariat, they invented the slogan of "Jewish capitalism". The working class does, nevertheless, regard the social situation in a synthetic light: only it does not employ the same methods as the anti-semites. It does not single out groups according to technical data, but according to economic functions. The synthetic realities with which it is concerned are the bourgeoisie, the peasants, the proletariat; and within these entities it discerns secondary synthetic groups: unions of workers, unions of employers, trusts, cartels, parties. Thus the explanations it puts forward for historical phenomena are perfectly in accord with the differentiated structure of a society based on the division of labour. Thus interpreted, history is the result of the play of economic systems and the inter-action of synthetic groups.

The majority of anti-semites comes, on the other hand, from the middle classes, that is to say, from people who have a standard of living equal or superior to that of the Jews, or, if the expression be preferred, from the *non-producers* (employers, business men, liberal professions, middlemen and hangers-on). A member of the

bourgeoisie, in fact, does not *produce*: he directs, administers, distributes, buys and sells; his function is to enter into direct contact with the consumer, which means that his activities are based on constant commerce with men, whereas the worker, carrying out his job, remains in permanent contact with things. Each one judges history according to the profession he follows. Conditioned by his daily work in handling materials, the worker sees society as the result of real forces operating according to strict laws. His dialectical "materialism" means that he views the social world in the same light as the material world. The bourgeois, on the contrary, and the anti-semitic in particular, have chosen to interpret history by the action of individual wills. Do they not depend on the same individual wills in the exercise of their profession?<sup>1</sup> In their attitude to social facts they resemble those primitive tribes which endow the sun or the wind with an individual soul. Intrigues and cliques, the villainy of one person, the courage and virtue of another, these are what determine the way their businesses are run, and thus the way the world is run. A bourgeois phenomenon, anti-semitism is therefore revealed as a deliberately chosen way of explaining collective events by the initiative of particular individuals.

Of course, the proletariat caricatures "the bourgeois" in its newspapers and propaganda sheets, just as the anti-semitic caricatures "the Jew". But this resemblance is only apparent. What makes the bourgeois, in the worker's

<sup>1</sup> I make an exception here for the engineer, the contractor, and the scientist, who are brought near to the proletariat by their work, and who, besides, are not often anti-semitic

eyes, is his bourgeois status, which is the sum of a number of external factors: and the bourgeois himself is no more than the synthetic whole of his outward actions and appearance. He is a whole bound together by *ways of behaviour*. But what makes the Jew, for the anti-semit, is the presence in him of "*Jewry*", the active principle, analogous to phlogiston or to the sleep-inducing agent in opium.

One must not leap to conclusions at this point: theories of heredity and race are of late date, and add merely a thin scientific veneer to this primitive conviction. Long before Mendel and Gobineau, there was a horror of the Jews, and those who felt it could have explained it no better than Montaigne could explain his friendship for La Boétie: "Because he is he and I am I." Without this metaphysical quality, the activities ascribed to the Jews would be utterly incomprehensible. How otherwise could be conceived the obtuse madness of a rich Jewish merchant who, if he were a reasonable man, should hope for the prosperity of the country in which he has his business, but who, we are assured, is doing all in his power to bring it to ruin? How understand the baneful internationalism of men whom their family, affections, habits, interests, the nature and source of their wealth, should attach to the fate of a particular country?

There is glib talk of a Jewish desire to dominate the world: but here again, unless we possess a key, the outward manifestations of this desire may well appear unintelligible to us; for at one moment we are shown the Jew as the mask of international capitalism, the imperialism of trusts, and the armaments industry, and at another as the mask of bolshevism, with a knife

between his teeth. With superb unconcern, responsibility for Communism, which ought to fill them with dread, is loaded on to Jewish bankers, while the evil of capitalist imperialism is laid at the door of the wretched Jews who overcrowd the rue des Rosiers.

But if we stop expecting the Jew to behave in a reasonable way and one in keeping with his own interests, if, on the contrary, we discern in him a metaphysical principle which forces him *to do evil* in all circumstances, even if by so doing he should bring about his own destruction, then everything becomes clear. This principle, it may easily be seen, is based on magic: from one aspect, it is both an essence and a solid form, and the Jew, no matter what he does, cannot alter it, any more than the fire can stop itself from burning. And, from another aspect, since the possibility of hating the Jew must remain, and since one cannot hate an earthquake or phylloxera, it has also a virtue of freedom. Only the freedom in question is carefully limited: the Jew is free *to do evil*, not good, and what free will he possesses is only enough to enable him to bear full responsibility for the crimes he has committed, not to effect his own reform. This is indeed a strange freedom which, instead of preceding and constituting essence, remains entirely subject to it, is only an irrational quality, and yet remains freedom!

There is only one being I can think of who is thus totally free and chained to evil, and that is the Spirit of Evil, Satan himself. Thus the Jew may be assimilated with the spirit of evil. His will, quite the contrary to the Kantian will, is one which aims at being purely, gratuitously and universally evil, it *is the will to evil*.

Evil inhabits the earth through his agency, and everything that goes wrong in society (crises, wars, famines, upheavals and revolts) can be imputed directly or indirectly to him. The anti-semitic is afraid of discovering that the world is badly put together: for then it would be necessary to invent and modify, and man would once more find himself master of his own destiny, and possessor of a terrible and infinite responsibility. Thus, in the Jew, he localises all the evil of the universe. If nations go to war, it does not mean that the concept of nationalism in its present form implies that of imperialism and a conflict of interests. No, it means that the Jew is hovering behind the façade of government, sowing the seeds of discord. If there is a class struggle, it does not mean that the economic structure is at fault: but simply that Jewish ringleaders and hook-nosed agitators have seduced the workers.

Thus anti-semitism, in its origin, is Manichean; it explains the way of the world through the struggle of the principle of Good against the principle of Evil. Between these two principles, a truce is unthinkable: one must triumph, and the other be annihilated. Look at Céline: his vision of the universe is catastrophic—the Jew is everywhere, the earth is lost, and the Aryan must never compromise, never come to terms. But let him beware! Should he but breathe, he immediately loses his purity, for the very air which enters his lungs is unclean. Does this not sound like the preaching of a Catharist? The only reason Céline was able to uphold the socialist theses of the Nazis was that he was paid for it. In his own heart, he did not believe them. For him, the only solution lies in mass suicide, non-

procreation, death. Others, like Maurras or the P.P.F.<sup>1</sup> take a less discouraging view: they foresee a long and often doubtful struggle, but one ending in the triumph of Good: it is Ormuzd against Ahriman. It is to be understood that the anti-semitic does not resort to Manicheanism as a secondary explanatory principle. But it is the primary choice of Manicheanism which explains and conditions anti-semitism. We must therefore ask ourselves what this original choice of attitude means for a man at the present day.

Let us compare for a moment the revolutionary concept of the class struggle with anti-semitic manicheanism. A Marxist does not regard the class struggle as the conflict between Good and Evil: it is rather a conflict of interests between human groups. What makes the revolutionary take up the viewpoint of the proletariat is that it is first of all his *own* class, then because it is oppressed, because it is by far the largest class, and because its fate in consequence tends to become confused with that of humanity generally: and, finally, because the fruits of his victory will necessarily entail the suppression of classes. The revolutionary's aim is to change the organisation of society. To do this, the old order must be destroyed, of course, but that in itself is not enough: above all, a new order must be created. If the impossible happened and the privileged class showed itself willing to co-operate in constructive socialism, furnishing open proofs of its good will, there would be no valid reason to reject its co-operation. And if it remains in the highest degree improbable that it would willingly offer to co-operate

<sup>1</sup> Parti Populaire Français.

with the socialists, that is because its inherent position as the privileged class prevents it from doing so, and not because it is driven in spite of itself by some internal demon to do evil. In any case, fractions of this class are constantly capable of becoming detached and sinking into the oppressed class, and such fractions are judged, not according to their essence but their actions. "I don't give a damn for your eternal essence," Politzer remarked to me one day.

Just the contrary of this obtains for the anti-semit with his manicheanism, where the whole emphasis is placed on destruction. It is no longer a question of a conflict of interests, but of the damage caused to society by an evil power. In consequence, Good consists above all in destroying Evil. Beneath the anti-semit's bitterness is concealed the optimistic belief that once Evil has been driven out, harmony will be re-established of its own accord. His task is therefore solely negative: for him, there is no question of building a society, but only of purifying the one which exists. To attain such an end, the co-operation of Jews of good will would be useless, and even damaging, and besides, in his eyes, there can be no such thing as a Jew of good will. Knight of the Good, the anti-semit is consecrated, and the Jew also, after his own fashion, is consecrated: consecrated like the untouchables, like natives stricken under a taboo. Thus the struggle takes place on a religious plane, and can only end in consecrated destruction.

Many advantages arise from such an attitude, which in the very first instance encourages mental laziness. It has been seen that the anti-semit understands nothing of modern society and is incapable of drawing up a

constructive plan; his activity is never based on technique and method, but always on passion. To a long-term undertaking, he prefers the brief and furious outburst of rage, analogous to the running amok of the Malayans. His intellectual activity is limited to *interpretation*: in historical events, he seeks whatever signs betoken the presence of an evil power. Hence arise those childish and involved fabrications which make him akin to the victims of advanced paranoia. But besides that, the anti-semitic canalises revolutionary impulses towards the destruction of certain men, rather than institutions; an anti-semitic mob considers its fury appeased when it has massacred a few Jews and burned a few synagogues.

In this way, the anti-semitic constitutes a safety valve for the possessor classes, who spur him on, and thus substitute for a dangerous hatred directed against a régime, a harmless hatred directed against individuals. Above all, this naïve dualism is eminently reassuring for the anti-semitic himself: if it is only a question of eliminating Evil, that means that the Good is already *present*. There is no need to seek it through anguish, to bring it to life, to wrestle with it patiently once it is discovered, to test it in action, to check it by its consequences, and finally, to accept the responsibilities arising from the moral choice one has made. It is not by chance that a basic optimism underlies the great surges of anti-semitic fury: the anti-semitic has come to a definite conclusion about Evil, so as not to have to come to a definite conclusion about Good. The more I throw myself into the struggle with Evil, the less am I tempted to call Good into question. Its name is never mentioned, but it is always implied in the conversation

of the anti-semit, and it is implied behind all his thoughts. When his consecrated mission of destruction has been accomplished, the lost Paradise will automatically be regained. But for the moment, the anti-semit is harassed by so many tasks that he has no time to think: he is fighting in the breach, and each fresh wave of indignation that he feels is a fresh pretext to turn away from the search for Good through anguish.

But there is more to it than that, and we are encroaching now on the domain of psychoanalysis. Manicheanism masks a profound attraction to Evil. For the anti-semit, Evil is his burden, his Job's portion. Others coming later will take care of the Good, if there is time. But he, manning the outposts of Society, turns his back on the pure virtues he is defending: his business is with Evil, his duty, to unmask and denounce it, to appraise its extent. His sole concern, therefore, is to amass anecdotes which reveal the lubricity of the Jew, his greed for money, his guile and treachery. He immerses himself in filth. Read Drumont's *La France Juive*: this book, labelled "An expression of the highest French morality", is a collection of vile and obscene stories. Nothing could shed more light on the complex nature of the anti-semit. As he has no desire to choose his own standard of Good and, out of fear of being distinguished from the herd, has allowed the common standard to be imposed upon him, his ethic is never based on the intuition of values, nor on what Plato calls Love: it is manifested only by the strictest, most imperative, most rigid and, at the same time, most gratuitous taboos. But Evil, on the other hand, is something he can contemplate untiringly, something for

which he has not only the intuition but, one would say, the taste as well. With an energy touching on obsession, he returns again and again to anecdotes of obscene or criminal actions, which excite him and satisfy his perverse leanings: but since, at the same time, he attributes them to the same infamous Jews on whom he pours his scorn, he gluts his passion without compromising himself. I knew a Protestant in Berlin, in whom desire took the form of indignation. The sight of women in bathing costumes threw him into a fury: but he was careful to cultivate this emotion, and spent much of his time at the swimming baths. The anti-semitic is the same.

Thus, one of the elements which make up his hatred is a profound sexual attraction towards the Jews. This arises, in the first place, from a fascinated curiosity about Evil. But above all, I believe, it arises from sadism. Anti-semitism cannot be understood, in fact, without recalling the fact that the Jew, object of so much execration, is perfectly innocent and, I would even say, inoffensive. The anti-semitic, of course, is forever telling us of Jewish secret societies, and of a formidable clandestine free-masonry. But should he meet a Jew face to face, it is as often as not a weak creature, ill prepared for violence and unable to defend himself. The individual weakness of the Jew, which makes him the easy victim of pogroms, does not go unnoticed by the anti-semitic, and even fills him with some anticipatory pleasure. His hatred for the Jew is in no way comparable to that which the Italians felt for the Austrians in 1830, or the French for the Germans in 1942. In these last two instances, the objects of the hatred were

oppressors, hard, cruel and powerful men who had arms, money, might on their side, and were able to do much more harm to the rebels than the latter could even have dreamed of doing them. Sadistic inclinations play no part in such hatreds. But since the anti-semitic finds Evil incarnate in men unarmed and so little to be feared, he is never in the painful necessity of proving himself a hero: to be an anti-semitic is *amusing*. The Jews can be beaten and tortured without fear of consequence: at the most, they may appeal to the laws of the Republic—but the laws are easy-going. Meanwhile, the sadistic attraction the anti-semitic feels for the Jew is so strong that it is not unusual to find one of these sworn enemies of Israel surrounded by Jewish friends. Of course, he calls them “exceptional”. According to him, “they are not like the others”. Given a place of honour in the studio of the painter whom I mentioned earlier, and who, incidentally, felt no horror over the Lublin murders, was the portrait of a Jew of whom he was fond, who had been shot by the Gestapo.

But the anti-semites’ protestations of friendship are not sincere, for the thought of sparing even the “good Jews” never enters into their plans, and even while according some virtue to those they know personally, they will never admit that their questioners may have met others who were as virtuous. In fact, they take pleasure in protecting a few individuals, through a sort of inversion of their sadism: they like to keep before them the living image of a people which they loathe. Anti-semitic women often enough feel a mixture of sexual repulsion and attraction for the Jews. One whom I knew had intimate relations with a Polish Jew. She

would go and get into his bed with him sometimes, and allow him to caress her shoulders and breasts, but nothing more. She liked to feel him respectful and submissive, and to see his violent desire bridled and humiliated. With other men, later, she had normal sexual relations.

The words "a beautiful Jewess" contain a very particular sexual significance, vastly different from that implied, for example, by "a beautiful Rumanian", "a beautiful Greek", or "a beautiful American". It is because, as it were, they emanate a subtle odour of rape and massacre. It was always the beautiful Jewess that the Tsar's Cossacks dragged by the hair through the streets of the burning village; and those special works devoted to accounts of flagellation always give a place of honour to the Jews. But there is no need to go rummaging in the realms of forbidden literature. From the Rebecca in "Ivanhoe" to the Jewess in "Gilles", not forgetting those mentioned by Ponson du Terrail, Jewesses have a well-defined role in the most serious novels: frequently violated or beaten black and blue, they are occasionally able to escape dishonour through death, but that is right and proper; and those who preserve their virtue are the docile servants or the humiliated sweethearts of indifferent Christians, who end by marrying Aryans. I do not think any more need be said, to show the value of the Jewess in folk-lore as a sexual symbol.

Having a destructive function, being a pure-minded sadist, the anti-semitic, in the depths of his heart, is a criminal. What he hopes and prepares for is nothing else but the *death of the Jew*.

The enemies of the Jew do not all, it is true, openly

demand his destruction, but the measures which they propose, all of which are aimed at the abasement, humiliation and outlawing of the Jew, are substitutes for the destruction they plan in their minds; they are symbolic murders. But the anti-semit has his conscience on his side: he is a criminal with a worthy motive. It is not his fault, after all, if his mission is to overcome Evil by Evil; the *real* France has conferred its powers of higher justice upon him. He does not, of course, have an opportunity of using them every day, but make no mistake about it: his sudden fits of rage, the thunderous denunciations he launches against the "yids", are so many capital executions: and the popular conscience guessed it, when it invented the expression "Jew-baiting". The anti-semit has thus elected to be a criminal, and what is more, a *guiltless* criminal: and here again he avoids responsibility, since he has subdued his instinct to murder, but has found the means to appease it without admitting it to himself. He knows that he is doing evil, but since he is doing Evil *for the sake of Good*, and since a whole people looks to him for deliverance, he considers himself a sort of sanctified evil-doer. Through a sort of inversion of all values, of which examples may be found in certain religions, for example in India, where sacred prostitution exists, it is, according to him, rage, hatred, pillage, murder, and all forms of violence, that are to be regarded with esteem, respect and enthusiasm. At the moment that wickedness exalts him, he feels within himself the lightness of heart and the peace that come from a clear conscience and the knowledge of a duty accomplished.

The portrait is complete. If many who declare readily

that they detest the Jews do not recognise themselves in it, that is because, in fact, they do not detest the Jews. But neither do they like them. They would not do them the least harm, but neither would they lift a little finger to stop others attacking them. They are not anti-semites they are not anything, they are *no one*, and since, after all, one must appear to be something, they play the part of echo and rumour; without thinking of doing evil, without thinking at all, they continue to repeat a few formulas picked up parrot-fashion, which give them the right of access to certain drawing-rooms. In this way, they discover the delights of idle chatter, and of filling their heads with a huge affirmation, which strikes them as being all the more respectable since it is not their own, but borrowed. In this case, anti-semitism is merely a vindication of their existence; besides, the futility of such people's existence is such that they willingly abandon this particular vindication for any other, provided it is "good form".

For anti-semitism is "good form", like all the manifestations of an irrational collective soul, tending to create an occult and conservative France. To such frivolous minds as these, it seems that by sedulously repeating that the Jew is harmful to the country, a rite of initiation is performed which assures their participation in the social sources of energy and warmth; and in this sense, anti-semitism has retained something of the human sacrifice. It also has one great advantage for people who recognise their basic inconsistency, and are easily bored: it allows them to take on the external trappings of passion; and as it has been the natural thing, from the early days of the Romantic movement,

to confuse these with personality, such anti-semites are able to acquire cheaply an aggressive personality.

A friend of mine has often quoted the case of an elderly cousin of his, who used to come to dinner at his home, and of whom everyone used to remark significantly: "Jules cannot bear the English." My friend cannot remember anything else ever having been said about cousin Jules. But that was enough: there was a tacit understanding between Jules and the family, everyone ostentatiously avoided talking about the English when he was there, and this precautionary measure gave him a semblance of existing in the eyes of his relations, while they in turn were rewarded by the agreeable feeling of taking part in a consecrated ceremony. Then, at a propitious moment, someone, after careful forethought, and as if accidentally, would make some observation on Great Britain or its dominions, and cousin Jules would pretend to fly into a great rage, and feel for the space of a second that he really did exist: which gave rise to much satisfaction all round.

Many people are anti-semites in the same way that cousin Jules was an anglophobe, and, naturally enough, they have not the slightest idea what their attitude really implies. Pale reflections, reeds bending to every wind, they would certainly not have invented anti-semitism if the conscious anti-semitic did not exist. But these are the people who, while being indifferent to the question, ensure the survival of anti-semitism, and help to hand it on. . . .

Now we are able to understand the anti-semitic. He is a man who is afraid. Not of the Jews, admittedly:

but of himself, of his conscience, of his freedom, of his instincts, of his responsibilities, of solitude, of change, of society and of the world—of everything except the Jews. He is a coward who does not want to admit his cowardice to himself; a killer who represses and subdues his impulse to murder without being able to stifle it, but who nevertheless only dares to kill in effigy, or in the anonymity of the mob; a malcontent who dares not revolt for fear of the consequences of his revolt. In embracing anti-semitism, he does not simply adopt an opinion, but chooses to be the person he is. He chooses the permanence and impenetrability of stone; the total lack of responsibility of a soldier who obeys his leaders, without having a leader. He has chosen to acquire nothing and to deserve nothing, and thinks that everything should accrue to him by birth—yet he is not a person of title.

Finally, he chooses to consider the Good as something already complete, beyond dispute or attack, not daring to inspect it closely for fear of being induced to question it, or to seek it in some other form. The Jew, in this sense, is only a pretext, and at another time a Negro or a Chinaman might serve as well. His existence merely permits the anti-semitic to stifle his own misgivings at birth, by persuading himself that his place in the world was fore-ordained, that it was always there waiting for him, and that he has a traditional right to occupy it. Anti-semitism, in a word, is fear when faced with the human situation. The anti-semitic is the man who wishes to be the pitiless rock, the raging torrent, the devastating lightning: anything and everything except a man.

## II

AND yet the Jews have one friend: the democrat. But he is a sorry champion. No doubt he declares that all men are equal in the eyes of the law, and no doubt it was he who founded the League of the Rights of Man. But his very declarations show the weakness of his position. He opted once and for all, in the eighteenth century, for the spirit of analysis. He has no eyes for the concrete syntheses with which history presents him. He does not recognise the Jew, the Arab or the Negro, the bourgeois or the worker, but man alone, at all times and in all places the same as himself. He breaks up each collectivity into its individual elements. For him, a physical body is the sum of a number of molecules, and a social body the sum of a number of individuals. And when he speaks of an individual, he means a particular incarnation of those universal traits which make up human nature.

Thus the dialogue between the anti-semitic and the democrat goes interminably on, without the one understanding the other, or even noticing that they are speaking of different things. If the anti-semitic blames the Jew for his avarice, the democrat replies that he knows Jews who are not grasping and Christians who are. But this in no way convinces the anti-semitic: what he really meant to say was that there is a particular "Jewish" avarice, influenced, that is to say, by the synthetic whole which is the *personality* of the Jew. He agrees nonchalantly that some Christians may be

avaricious, because for him, Christian avarice and Jewish avarice are not of the same nature.

The democrat, on the other hand, sees the nature of avarice as universal and invariable, capable of being one of the many characteristics which constitute an individual, but which in all circumstances remains identical: there are no two ways of being avaricious, either one is or one isn't.

Thus the democrat, like the scientist, overlooks the particular case: he regards the individual as the sum of universal characteristics. It follows that, in his defence of the Jew, he rescues the Jew as a man, but annihilates him as a Jew. Unlike the anti-semit, the democrat is not afraid of himself: what he dreads are those vast collective entities in which he runs the risk of being dissolved. He has thus chosen the spirit of analysis because the spirit of analysis *does not see* these synthetic realities. From this point of view, he is afraid of the awakening of a "Jewish awareness" in the Jew, in other words, a consciousness of the Israelite collectivity, just as he fears the awakening of "class consciousness" in the worker. He defends this by trying to persuade individuals that they live in an isolated state. "There is no such thing as a Jew, there is no such thing as a Jewish question," he says. Which means that he wishes to separate the Jew from his religion, his family, his ethnic group, in order to plunge him in the democratic crucible, out of which he will emerge single and naked, an individual and solitary particle, just like all the other particles. This was known in the United States as the policy of assimilation. The present immigration laws have demonstrated the failure of this policy and,

in short, of the democratic point of view. How could it well be otherwise?

For a Jew, conscious and proud of being a Jew, who insists on the fact that he belongs to the Jewish community, without at the same time ignoring the ties which bind him to a national collectivity, there is not such a great difference between the anti-semitic and the democrat. The former wants to destroy him as a man, so that only the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable will remain; the latter wants to destroy him as a Jew, in order to preserve in him only the man, the universal and abstract subject of the rights of man and of the citizen. Even in the most liberal-minded democrat, a shade of anti-semitism can be detected: he is hostile to the Jew in such degree as the Jew takes it upon himself to think like a Jew. This hostility is often expressed by a sort of indulgent and amused irony, as when he remarks, of a Jewish friend whose origin is easily recognisable: "He really is a little *too* Jewish," or when he proclaims: "The only thing I blame the Jews for is their gregarious instinct. If you let one into a business, he'll bring another ten in with him." During the German occupation, the democrat was profoundly and sincerely shocked by anti-semitic persecution, but he might be heard to remark with a sigh: "The Jews are going to come back from exile with such insolence and such an appetite for revenge that I am rather afraid of a recrudescence of anti-semitism." What he was really afraid of was that their persecution might help to give the Jews a sharpened awareness of themselves.

The anti-semitic blames the Jew for *being* a Jew; the democrat is inclined to blame him for *considering* him-

them is not a nature, but a condition, in other words, a set of limits and compulsions: the necessity of dying, of working for a living, of existing in a world already inhabited by other men. And this condition is really only the fundamental human situation itself or, if another way of putting it be preferred, the whole of the abstract characteristics common to every situation.

I will concede to the democrat, therefore, that the Jew is a man like all the rest: but that tells me nothing particular about him, except perhaps that he is free and at the same time a slave, that he is born, knows joy and suffering, and dies, that he loves and hates, like all other men. I can deduce nothing further from these too general premises. If I wish to know *who* the Jew is, I must, since he is a being in a given situation, first see what light this situation throws on him. It must be noted that I am confining my description to the Jews of France, since it is the problem of the French Jew which is our problem.

I do not deny that there is a Jewish race. But here a point must be made clear. If, by race, is understood that indefinable complex to which are attributed willy-nilly, physical characteristics as well as intellectual and moral traits, then I do not believe in it any more than I do in table-turning. What, for want of a better term, I will call ethnic characteristics, are certain inherited physical conformations which are found more frequently among Jews than among non-Jews. But even here one must be careful: it would be more correct to say *some* Jewish races. As is well known, all Semites are not Jews, which complicates the problem; we know also that certain fair-haired Russian Jews are further removed from a crinkly-

haired Jew of Algeria than from an Aryan of Eastern Prussia.

Each country, if the truth be known, has its Jews, and whatever notion we have of the Israelite is likely to be very different from that held by our neighbours. When I was living in Berlin, in the early days of the Nazi régime, I had two French friends, one of whom was a Jew and the other not. The Jew represented an "extreme Semitic type": a hooked nose, projecting ears and thick lips. A Frenchman would unhesitatingly have recognised him for a Jew. But as he was fair-haired, lean and phlegmatic, the Germans were completely taken in; he even amused himself by going out sometimes with the S.S., who had no idea of his race, and one of whom even said to him one day: "I can pick a Jew a hundred yards away." My second friend, on the other hand, who was Corsican and a Catholic, the son and grandson of Catholics, had black, rather curly hair, a Bourbon nose, a sallow complexion, and was short and fat: children threw stones at him in the streets and called him "*Jude*", merely because he approximated to a certain type of oriental Jew who is popularly accepted as the German conception of the race.

However that may be, and even while admitting that all Jews have certain physical traits in common, it is not possible to conclude from that, unless by the vaguest of analogies, that they must therefore all possess the same traits of character. What is more, the physical indications which may be seen in the Semite are spatial, hence juxtaposed and separable. I may at any time find one of them existing singly in an Aryan. Am I to conclude from this that the Aryan also possesses such and such a

psychic quality ordinarily attributed to the Jews? Obviously not. But then, the whole racial theory falls to the ground: it presupposes that the Jew is an irresolvable whole, yet we now see that this whole has become a mosaic, each element being a stone which can be taken out and transposed to some other whole; we can neither draw conclusions from the physical as to the moral, nor can we postulate any psycho-physiological parallelism.

If someone suggests that the physical characteristics must be considered as a *whole*, I will answer that either this whole is the *sum* of the ethnic traits, and can<sup>in</sup> no way be regarded as the spatial equivalent of a psychic *synthesis*, any more than an association of brain cells can correspond to a thought, or else, when one speaks of the physical aspect of the Jew, one means a syncretic totality which lends itself to intuition. In this case, indeed, there may be a "*gestalt*" in the sense Kohler gives to the word, and that is exactly what anti-semites allude to when they allege that they can "smell out a Jew", or "sense the presence of a Jew . . ." and so on. Only it is impossible to perceive the physical elements, apart from the psychic indications which are mixed up with them. If, walking down the rue des Rosiers, I notice a Jew seated upon his doorstep, I recognise him at once for a Jew by his black and curly beard, the slightly hooked nose, the protuberant ears, the iron-rimmed spectacles, the bowler drawn down over the eyes, the black garments, the swift and nervous gestures, and the smile with its strange, sorrowful kindliness. How are the physical and the moral to be separated? His beard is black and curled, which is a physical

characteristic. But what strikes me first and foremost is that he allows it to grow: by doing so, he shows that he adheres to the traditions of the Jewish community, and also that he comes from Poland, and belongs to a first generation of immigrants. Is his son less a Jew for going clean-shaven? Other traits, like the shape of the nose and the position of the ears, are purely anatomical, and others purely psychic and social, like, for instance, the choice of clothing and the spectacles, the facial expression and the mimicry. What is it, then, that singles him out as an Israelite, if not this irresolvable whole in which the psychic and the physical, the social, the religious and the individual, are all intimately fused, if not this living synthesis, which is obviously not capable of being transmitted by heredity, and which, fundamentally, is identical with his complete *personality*? We must therefore look upon the physical and hereditary characteristics of the Jew as one factor among others of his situation, and not a determining condition of his nature.

If we are unable to determine the Jew by his race, can we then define him through his religion, or through a strictly Israelite national community? Here the question becomes more complex. There certainly did exist, at a remote epoch, a religious and national community which was called Israel. But the history of this community is of a disintegration over twenty-five centuries. It lost first of all its sovereignty, was held in captivity by Babylon, fell under Persian domination, and finally came under the Roman conquest. This must not be regarded as the result of a curse, unless there is such a thing as a geographic curse: the situation of Palestine at

the crossroads of all the trade routes of the ancient world, and crushed between powerful empires, is quite enough to explain this slow dispossession. The religious tie between the Jews of the diaspora and those who remained on their native soil was reinforced, and took on the significance and value of a national tie. But this "transfer" demonstrated, as can be imagined, a spiritualisation of collective ties, and a spiritualisation means, after all, an enfeeblement. Besides, Christianity came on the scene soon after, bringing with it a division: the appearance of this new religion created a major crisis in the world of Israel, ranging the Jews who had emigrated against those of Judea. Faced with the "strong structure" of Christianity at the start, the Hebraic religion was revealed as a weak, and already disintegrating, structure, and was preserved only by a complex policy of both concession and stubbornness. It resisted the persecutions and the wide-spread dispersal of the Jews in the medieval world, but it put up a much more feeble resistance to the onward march of learning and of the critical spirit. The Jews we see around us to-day are no longer connected to their religion by anything more than a tie of ceremony and good manners. I asked one of them why he had had his son circumcised, and his answer was: "Because it pleased my mother, and besides it's cleaner." And when I asked why his mother wanted it, he replied, "Because of her friends and neighbours." It seems to me that such over-rational explanations hide a secret and profound desire to affirm the attachment to tradition and to take root, in the absence of a national past, in a past made up of rites and customs. But it is just in this instance that religion

is only a symbolic medium. It was not able, at least in Western Europe, to resist the concerted attacks of rationalism and the Christian spirit: Jewish atheists, whom I have asked about this, admit that when they question the existence of God, it is always in relation to the Christian religion. The religion they attack, and of which they wish to free themselves, is Christianity; there is no difference between their atheism and that of Roger Martin du Gard, who talks of *freeing himself* from the Catholic faith. Not for a moment are they atheists *against the Talmud*, and the priest for them is always the curé, never the rabbi.

Thus, the given factors of the problem appear to be these: a concrete historical community is first of all *national* and *religious*; the Jewish community, however, which was both, has become gradually void of all those concrete characteristics. We may call it quite simply an abstract historical community. Its dispersal implies the disintegration of common traditions: and we noted, a little earlier, that twenty centuries of dispersal and political impotence have prohibited it from having an *historical past*. If it is true, as Hegel says, that a collectivity is historical in the measure in which it retains the memory of its history, the Jewish collectivity is the least historical of all societies, since it can have no memory but of a long martyrdom, or in other words, of a prolonged passivity.

What is it, therefore, which allows the Jewish community to preserve a semblance of unity? In order to answer this question, we must return to the idea of *situation*. It is neither their past, nor their religion, nor their soil, which unites the sons of Israel. But if they

have a common bond, if they all deserve the name of Jew, it is because they share a situation common to the Jew, in other words, because they live in the midst of a community which regards them as Jews. In short, the Jew is perfectly assimilable by modern nations, but defines himself as the one the nations do not wish to assimilate. What is weighed against him in the first place is that he is the murderer of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Has the intolerable situation of these people, condemned to live in the heart of a society which adores the God whom they have killed, ever been considered? From the primitive aspect, the Jew is thus a murderer or the son of a murderer (which, in the eyes of a collectivity which conceives responsibility in a prelogical form, amounts strictly to the same thing) and as such, he is taboo. Obviously, this does not constitute an explanation of modern anti-semitism; but if the anti-semite has chosen the Jew as object for his hatred, it is because of the religious horror the latter has always inspired.

One effect of this horror has been a curious economic phenomenon. If the Church in the Middle Ages tolerated the Jews, when it could either have forcibly assimilated them or had them massacred, it was because they fulfilled an economic function of primary necessity: accursed themselves, they followed an accursed but indispensable trade; not being able either to own estates or to serve in the army, they engaged in the traffic of money, which no Christian could enter without becoming defiled. Thus, to the original malediction was swiftly

<sup>1</sup> This, let it be noted at once, is a legend created by the Christian propaganda of the diaspora. It is quite evident that the Cross is a *Roman* punishment, and that Christ was executed by the Romans as a political agitator.

added an economic one, and it is especially the latter which has survived. The Jews to-day are blamed for following non-productive trades, without its being realised that their apparent autonomy in the heart of the nation arises from their being confined in the first place to those trades by being forbidden all others. So that it is not going too far to say that it was the Christians who *created* the Jew by putting a sudden stop to his assimilation, and by providing him against his will with a means of livelihood in which he has since then excelled. This, again, is now only a memory: the differentiation of economic functions is such at the present day, that no definite official role can be assigned to the Jew; although broadly speaking, it remains noticeable that his long exclusion from certain occupations has diverted him from following them when he has had the chance to do so. But modern societies have seized upon this memory and have made of it the pretext and the basis for their anti-semitism. Thus, if one wants to know what the Jew of to-day really is, it is the Christian conscience which must be interrogated, and the question to be asked is not "What is a Jew?" but "*What have you done with the Jews?*"

The Jew is a man whom other men look upon as a Jew—that is the simple truth from which we must set out. In this sense, the democrat is right, as opposed to the anti-semit: it is the anti-semit who *makes* the Jew. But it would be wrong to attribute the mistrust, the curiosity and the veiled hostility which Israelites find all round them merely to the intermittent outbursts of a few impassioned antagonists. In the first place, as we have seen, anti-semitism is the expression of a blind,

diffuse, primitive society which survives in a latent state within the legal collectivity. It must therefore not be supposed that a generous impulse, a few kind words, or a stroke of the pen will be enough to eliminate it: that would be like imagining one had eliminated war, merely by denouncing its effects in a book.

The Jew doubtless values the sympathy shown to him at its true worth, but it can never prevent him from regarding anti-semitism as a permanent element of the community in which he lives. He knows, furthermore, that the democrats and all the others who come to his defence have at the same time a tendency to treat anti-semitism with circumspection. First of all, we live in a republic, where all opinions are permitted. Added to that, the myth of the sacred Union still exerts such an influence on all French people that, in order to avoid internal conflicts, they are ready to make the greatest compromises, especially during periods of international crisis which are also, of course, the times when anti-semitism is most virulent. Naturally, it is the naïve and well-intentioned democrat who makes all the concessions, for the anti-semite will make none. He has the benefit of his anger; so that people say: "It's better not to irritate him . . ." and speak guardedly in front of him. For instance, in 1940, many Frenchmen rallied to the support of the Pétain government, which was at the time ceaselessly extolling this Union, but with what hidden intent we now know. The same government later took anti-semitic measures. The "Pétainistes" raised no protest. They were not entirely happy about it, but after all. . . . If France could be saved at the cost of a few sacrifices, was it not better to shut one's eyes to

what went on? They were not, it is true, anti-semites, and they even spoke to those Jews whom they encountered with the most polite commiseration. But how could the Jews feel otherwise but that their fate was being sacrificed to the mirage of a united and patriarchal France?

To-day,<sup>1</sup> those of them whom the Germans failed to deport or murder are managing to return to their homes. Many joined the Resistance movement when it first began, others have a son or a cousin in the armed forces under General Leclerc. All France fraternises and rejoices in the streets, and social struggles seem temporarily forgotten, while the newspapers devote whole columns to the prisoners of war and those who were deported. But is there any mention of the Jews? Are they hailed for having escaped and returned to us? Does any one give a thought to those who died in the gas chambers of Lublin? There is not a word of them, not a line in the daily papers. And simply because the anti-semites must not be provoked. More than ever, France is in need of unity. Well-intentioned journalists will tell you: "In the interests of the Jews themselves, it is better not to say too much about them at the moment." The French community lived without them for four years, and it is thought wiser not to stress their reappearance. Does anyone imagine the Jews are not fully aware of the situation? Does anyone think that they fail to understand the reason for this silence? There are those among the Jews themselves who welcome it, however, by saying "The less talk there is about us, the better." Can any Frenchman, sure of himself, of his

<sup>1</sup> Written in October 1944.

religion and his race, even begin to understand the state of mind which dictates such an utterance? Is it not clear that one would have to have felt, over a period of years and in one's own country, the hostility, the lurking ill-will, and the indifference so easily transformed into enmity, in order to acquire such a resigned wisdom, such a policy of self-effacement? Their return has therefore been a clandestine one, and their joy at being liberated has not merged with the general joy of the nation.

That this has caused them suffering, the following incident will demonstrate sufficiently well: I had written in *Lettres Françaises*, and with no other idea than that of making a complete enumeration, some phrase or other on the sufferings of the prisoners of war, of those who were deported or held in political detention, and of the Jews. Several Israelites personally thanked me for it in a most touching way—but how forsaken they must have felt, to dream of thanking an author for having merely written the *word* Jew in an article!

So the Jew is in his situation of Jew because he lives in the midst of a collectivity which regards him as a Jew. His enemies are impassioned, his defenders luke-warm. The democrat makes moderation his golden rule: and, while synagogues are burned, utters reproaches or delivers admonitions. He is tolerant in all things, even making a snobbery of tolerance and extending it to the very enemies of democracy. (Was it not the fashion, among the radical Left, to see genius in Maurras?) How can he fail to understand the anti-semitic? He is as if fascinated by all those who plot his ruin. And it may even be that, in the depths of his

being, he has a sort of hankering after the violence which he forbids himself. Above all, the conflict is unequal. The democrat, in order to show real ardour in pleading the cause of the Jew, would have to be himself a Manichean, and regard the Jew as the Principle of the Good. But how could that be? The democrat is not mad. He makes himself the Jew's advocate because he sees in him a member of humanity: but humanity contains many other members who are also in need of defence, and the democrat has his hands full. He helps the Jew when he has the time: but the anti-semit has only one enemy, and can devote his whole attention to him; it is he who sets the pace. Strenuously attacked, feebly defended, the Jew feels himself in peril in a society for which anti-semitism is a perpetual temptation. It is this which must be examined more closely.

French Jews belong in the majority either to the lower or upper bourgeoisie. They are for the most part in occupations which I will qualify as depending upon opinion, in the sense that success here does not depend on whatever skill one may have in working on material things, but on the opinion other men hold of one. Whether one is a lawyer or a hatter, custom is attracted by one's power to please. In consequence, the occupations which we are discussing are full of ceremonial: it is necessary to inspire or capture confidence, and to hold it fast; a smart appearance, an outwardly strict code of behaviour, and an honourable name all play their part in the ceremonial, and in the thousand and one manoeuvres which must be gone through to attract clients. Thus, what matters above all else is reputa-

tion: one *makes oneself* a reputation and lives on it, which means that basically one is entirely dependent upon other men, whereas the peasant's primary concern is with his land, and the worker's with the raw materials and implements of his trade.

The Jew, however, is placed in a paradoxical situation. It is lawful for him to earn a reputation for honesty, just like other men and by the same methods. But this is overlaid upon an earlier reputation, instantaneously given, and which he cannot throw off whatever he does: the reputation of being a Jew. A Jewish workman, working in a mine, on a tip-truck, or in an iron foundry, may forget that he is a Jew. Not so a Jewish tradesman. If he performs a great many actions, all giving proof of his honesty and disinterestedness, he may perhaps be called a *good* Jew. But Jew he is and will remain. At least, when he is described as honest or dishonest, he knows the reason. He remembers perfectly well the actions which earned him these epithets. But when he is called a Jew, it is quite another matter: then, it is not a question of a particular condition, but of a certain *demeanour* which applies to everything he does.

He has been repeatedly told that a Jew thinks like a Jew, eats, drinks and sleeps like a Jew, and is honest or dishonest in a Jewish manner. Yet no matter how long he scrutinises himself, he cannot discover this style of behaviour in any of his actions. Are any of us conscious of our style of living? In actual fact, we are too closely attached to the self to be able thus to view ourselves from the standpoint of an objective witness. All the same, the little word "Jew" has at some stage or

other entered his life, and remains implanted there. Some children as early as six or seven have come to blows with school companions who call them "yids". Others are long kept in ignorance of their race. A young Jewish girl in a family which I know was fifteen before she discovered the actual meaning of the word Jew. During the occupation, a Jewish doctor who lived shut up in his house in Fontainebleau, brought up his grandchildren without ever breathing a word to them of their origin. But sooner or later, and in one way or another, they must learn the truth: and sometimes it happens through the smiles of people around them, sometimes through a rumour, sometimes through open insults. The later the discovery is made, the more violent is the shock: all at once, they perceive that others have known something about them which they did not know themselves, and that they have all the time been described by an ambiguous and disquieting term which is not used among their family. They feel themselves separated, cut off from the society of normal children, who run and play calmly and in security all around them, and who have no *special name*. When, on going home, they see their father, they think: "Is he a Jew too?" and the respect they feel for him is poisoned. How then can they fail to retain throughout their lives the impact of the first revelation? The disturbances produced in a child's mind when it suddenly discovers that its parents have sexual relations have been described a hundred times: and how can the mind of the little Jew fail to be plunged into similar confusion when he steals a furtive glance at his parents, and thinks: "They are Jews."

For all that, he is told in his family that he must be proud of being a Jew. No longer knowing whom to believe, he is torn between humiliation, anguish and pride. He feels that he is *apart*, but no longer understands what has made him apart, and is, in fact, sure of one thing only—that whatever he does, he is and will remain in the eyes of others a Jew.

There has been much rightful indignation over the vile “yellow star” which the German government forced the Jews to wear. What appeared intolerable about it was that the attention of others was *drawn* to the Jews, and that they were constrained to feel themselves perpetually Jews under the gaze of other men. It reached a point where others deliberately went out of their way to show sympathy to the unfortunate beings thus singled out. But when certain well-intentioned people began to greet the Jews they met with too open displays of courtesy, the Jews declared that they found these demonstrations very distressing. Under the sustained and compassionate gaze of others, they felt themselves turned into *objects*. Objects of commiseration, of pity, perhaps: but objects all the same. They provided for the liberal and virtuous an opportunity of making a generous gesture, of showing their feelings: but they were no more than that opportunity. The liberal-minded were entirely free, on meeting a Jew, either to shake him by the hand or to spit in his face; and they decided according to their moral viewpoint and according to the choice they had made of themselves; the Jew was not free to be a Jew. The more strong-minded still preferred the gesture of hatred to the gesture of charity, because hatred is a passion and

seems less free, whereas charity must work from the top downwards.

We came to understand that so well that, in the end, we averted our eyes on meeting a Jew who wore a star. We were uneasy and embarrassed by the fact that our own gaze, if it fell upon him, constituted him a Jew, in spite of himself and in spite of ourselves: the best way of showing one's sympathy and friendliness consisted in appearing not to see: for, whatever effort we might make to touch the *person*, it was necessarily the Jew that we encountered. But how could one fail to see that the Nazi order had merely driven to an extreme an already existing situation, which we had previously accepted without a murmur? Before the armistice, it is true, the Jew did not wear a star. But his name, his appearance, his gestures, and a thousand other traits singled him out as a Jew; and whether he took a walk in the street, entered a café, a shop, or someone's drawing room, he knew that he was *marked down* as a Jew. If someone approached him with an over-candid, an over-genial air, he knew that he had become the *object* of a demonstration of tolerance, and that the speaker had chosen him as a pretext for declaring before the world and himself—I am broad-minded, I am not an anti-semit, I recognise only individuals and disregard races.

For all that, the Jew, in the depths of his being, considers himself no different from other men: he speaks their language, he has the same class interests and the same national interests, he reads the same newspapers as they read, he votes as they do, he understands their opinions and shares them. But the others make clear to him that all this counts for nothing, since he has a

"Jewish manner" of speaking, of reading, of voting. If he demands an explanation, he is shown a portrait in which he can see nothing of himself. Yet it must be a portrait of himself, since thousands are agreed upon recognising it as such. What can he do? We shall see shortly how, at the root of Jewish uneasiness, lies this necessity which the Jew feels, ceaselessly to question himself, and finally to accept with resignation the phantom being, unknown yet familiar, elusive yet ever near, which haunts him and which is none other than himself, himself as he is for others. It may be said that this applies to everyone, that we all have a character familiar to our friends but invisible to ourselves. Doubtless: and this is, at bottom, no more than the expression of our fundamental relationship with the Other. But the Jew has a character like us, and is a Jew into the bargain. This means for him, in some way, a duplication of the fundamental relationship with others. He is irrevocably fixed.

What makes his situation even more incomprehensible in his own eyes is the fact that he enjoys full rights as a citizen, at least when the society in which he lives is stable. In periods of crisis and persecution, he is a hundred times more wretched, but at least he can rebel and, by a dialectic similar to that which Hegel describes in "Master and Slave", regain his liberty in the face of oppression and deny his accursed nature as a Jew by taking up arms against those who wish to impose it upon him. But when everything is calm, against whom can he revolt? He certainly accepts the collectivity around him, since he wishes to play his part in the game, and since he acquiesces in all the customary

ceremonial, and follows the same ritual of honour and respectability as all the others. Besides, he is slave to no one: a free citizen living under a régime which sanctions free competition, no social dignity and no burden of State are withheld from him; he may be decorated with the Legion of Honour, become a great lawyer or a minister. But at the very moment when he reaches the summit of the legally constituted society, another society, amorphous, diffuse and omnipresent, lets itself be glimpsed, and shuts him out. He feels in a very particular fashion the vanity of honours and wealth, since the most dazzling success will never gain him admission into this society which claims to be the *true* one: a minister, he will be a Jewish minister, at once an Excellency and an untouchable. He encounters no special opposition: but it is as if people fled from him; an impalpable void is created, and above all, through some invisible chemical change, everything he touches loses its value.

In a bourgeois society, the constant interplay of individuals, the collective currents, fashions, and customs, create *values*. The values of a poem, a piece of furniture, a house, a landscape, are to a great extent the outcome of these spontaneous condensations which settle upon the objects like a light dew; they are strictly national values, resulting from the normal functioning of a traditionalist and historical collectivity. To be French does not mean merely to be born in France, to vote and to pay one's taxes, it means above all to be able to recognise and apply these values. And when one takes part in their creation, one is in a certain sense inwardly reassured, one finds a justification for existing

in a sort of adherence to the entire community; to be able to appreciate a piece of Louis XVI furniture, the shrewdness of an aphorism by Chamfort, a landscape in the Ile-de-France, a picture by Claude Lorraine, is to sense and reaffirm that one belongs to the French community, and to renew a tacit social contract with all the members of that community. Once that is done, the vague fortuitousness of our existence disappears, and is replaced by the necessity for a legally sanctioned existence. Every Frenchman who is moved by reading Villon, or by looking at the palace of Versailles, performs a public function and becomes the holder of indefeasible rights. But then, the Jew is the person who, on principle, is refused access to values. No doubt the worker is in the same position. But the situation is different: he can reject bourgeois values and culture with disdain, and plan how to substitute his own for them.

The Jew, in principle, belongs to the very class of people who repudiate him, sharing their tastes and their mode of life: he is *in contact* with these values but he does not see them, they should be his but he is denied them; he is told that he is blind. Naturally that is nonsense: does anyone believe that Bloch, Crémieux, Suarès, Schwob or Benda understand great French works of art less well than a Christian grocer or a Christian policeman? Does anyone believe that Max Jacob handled our language less expertly than some "Aryan" clerk in a municipal office? Did Proust, who was half-Jewish, only half understand Racine? And whoever learned more about Stendhal from the Aryan Chuquet, notorious for his cacography, than from the Jew Léon Blum?

But it matters little that this is an error, the fact remains that the error is collective. And the Jew must not only decide for himself whether it is true or false, what is more he must produce proof. Even then, the proof he furnishes will always be open to challenge. He can go as far as he likes in understanding a work of art, a custom, an epoch, or a style: what gives the thing under consideration its *true* value, the value to which only Frenchmen belonging to the real France have access, is precisely that which is "beyond", which cannot be expressed in words. It will be vain for him to put forward his own culture, his own achievements: the culture is Jewish, the achievements are Jewish, he is a Jew precisely because he does not even have an inkling of that which has to be understood.

Thus the attempt is made to persuade him that he misses the true significance of things, and about him forms an impalpable haze which is the *true* France, with its *true* values, its *true* tact, its *true* morality, in all of which he has no part. He can, in the same way, acquire all the possessions he likes, country houses and acres of land, if he has the means: but the very instant that he becomes the legal owner, the property, in some subtle way, takes on another meaning. Only a Frenchman, the son of a Frenchman, the son or grandson of a peasant, is capable of really possessing. To possess a humble cottage in a village, it is not sufficient to have bought it for solid cash, one has to know all the neighbours, their parents and grandparents, the crops sown in the district, the oaks and beeches in the forest, one has to know all about ploughing and fishing and hunting, one has to have cut one's initials on the tree

trunks as a child and returned as a man to find them there enlarged. You may rest assured that the Jew does not fulfil these conditions. If it comes to that, neither perhaps does the Frenchman, but that is just part of the national charm: there is a Jewish way and a French way of confusing the issue. Thus the Jew remains the stranger, the intruder, the unassimilated being at the very centre of the community. Everything is within his reach, and yet he possesses nothing: for, he is told, what one really possesses cannot be bought. The value of everything that he touches, of everything that he acquires, crumbles up in his hands; earthly possessions, true possessions, are just the things he has not got.

For all that, he knows that he is contributing as much as any other to shaping the future of the community which rejects him. But if the future is to be his, the past at least is denied him. Besides, the fact must be accepted, if he looks back on the past, he sees that his race has no part in it: neither the kings of France nor their ministers, neither the great military leaders nor the noble lords, neither the artists nor the thinkers, were Jews; it was not the Jews who launched the French Revolution. The reason is simple: up to the nineteenth century, the Jews were, like women, in tutelage, so that their contribution to political and social life, like that of women, is of recent date. The names of Einstein, Charlie Chaplin, Bergson, Chagall, Kafka, are enough to show what they might have given the world had they been emancipated sooner. This does not matter, but one fact remains. These Frenchmen can make no claim on the history of France. From their collective memory, they can draw nothing but dark recollections.

of pogroms, of the ghettos, of periods of exodus, of monotonous, long-drawn suffering, and twenty centuries, not of evolution, but of repetition.

The Jew is not yet *historical*, for all that he comes from the most ancient, or almost the most ancient, of peoples: and it is this that gives him his perpetual air of being age-old yet ever fresh; he has wisdom, but no history. That is all of no account, it may be said: it is only a question of receiving him without reserve: our history will be his, or at least that of his son. But that is just what everyone is far from doing. And so he drifts along, unsure, uprooted. Let him not take it into his head, either, to turn back to Israel, in seeking a community and a past to compensate for those which are denied him. This Jewish community which is based, not upon the nation, nor on the land, nor on religion—at least in present-day France—nor on material interests, but upon an identity of situation, may provide a true *spiritual* bond of affection, culture and mutual aid. But his enemies will say immediately it is an ethnical community, and he himself, finding it very difficult to describe, will perhaps use the word “race”. Then and there, he admits that the anti-semitic is in the right: “You can see clearly now that there is a Jewish *race*, they themselves recognise the fact, and besides, wherever they are, they always get together.” And, in fact, if the Jews want to derive any legitimate pride from this community, since there is neither any collective and specifically Jewish achievement, nor any Israelite civilisation properly speaking, nor even a shared mysticism, they are driven in the end to exalt racial qualities. In this way, the anti-semitic must always win.

In short, the Jew who has intruded into the French community is told that he must remain isolated. If he does not consent, insults are heaped upon him. But if he obeys, there is no greater effort to assimilate him—he is *tolerated*. And even then, with so much mistrust that, at every turn, he is obliged to “prove himself”. If war or internal strife break out, the “true” Frenchman does not have to prove himself: he fulfils quite simply his military or civil obligations. But for the Jew, it is a very different matter: he can be certain that the number of Jews in the armed forces will be rigorously checked. Thus he finds himself suddenly in the same boat with all his co-religionists. Even if he is over the age limit for active service, he must feel—whether he does so or not—the need to join up, because everyone else alleges that the Jews are shirking the call-up. And the rumour is well-founded, someone may say. Not at all: in one of Stekel’s analyses of a Jewish complex which I will mention further on, the following appears: “The Christians generally used to say [it is a Jewish woman speaking] that the Jews dodged military service as much as they could, and when he heard that, my husband wanted to join up as a volunteer.” That happened at the beginning of the 1914–18 war, in Austria, a country which had not been at war since 1866, on which occasion she had fought with a professional army. The reputation for shirking given to the Jews in Austria, and in France also, is thus no more than the spontaneous outcome of the mistrust felt towards the Jew.

In 1938, at the time of the international crisis which came to a head at Munich, the French government called up only certain categories of reservists, so that

the majority of men capable of bearing arms had not yet been mobilised. But even then, stones were thrown at the shop-window of a friend of mine, a Jewish tradesman at Belleville, and he was accused of evading service. Thus the Jew, if he is to be left in peace at all, should be called up before the rest, or in a time of food shortage, go hungry before the rest: if any collective misfortune strikes the country, it is he who must suffer the most. Being perpetually under the obligation of proving that he is French entails for the Jew *a situation of culpability*: if, on each and every occasion, he does not do more—a great deal more—than the rest, he is culpable. He is called a dirty Jew, and one might parody the line of Beaumarchais and say of him: Judging by the qualities demanded of the Jew in order to turn him into a “true” Frenchman, how many Frenchmen would be worthy of being Jews in their own country?

As the Jew depends on opinion for his profession, his rights and his life, his situation is never stable: legally beyond attack, he is at the mercy of any mood or passion which may seize the “real” community. He keeps a sharp watch on the progress of anti-semitism, he anticipates crises and spies out hidden currents, as the peasant watches for the first signs of a storm. Untiringly he calculates the repercussions that external events will have on his own position. He may accumulate legal safeguards, honours and riches, but doing so only makes him more vulnerable, and he knows it. Thus it seems to him that his efforts are both crowned with success—for he knows the brilliant triumphs of his race—and at the same time rendered vain by being under a curse. He can never attain the security of the

most lowly Christian. That is perhaps one of the meanings of *The Trial*, by the Jew Kafka: like the hero of the novel, the Jew is involved in a long trial, in which he does not know who are his judges, and scarcely more his advocates, in which he does not know what he is charged with, yet knows that he is regarded as guilty; the judgement is constantly postponed another week, another fortnight, and he profits from the delay to find a thousand safeguards for himself: but with each new precaution blindly taken, he is plunged a little deeper into guilt; his situation may appear flourishing from the outside, but the interminable trial eats into him invisibly: and it sometimes happens, as in the novel, that men come to seize and drag him off, pretending his case has been lost, to murder him on some waste lot in the suburbs.

The anti-semites are right to say that the Jew eats, drinks, reads, sleeps and dies like a Jew. What else could he do? They have subtly poisoned his food, his sleep, and even his death; how, then, can he fail to be obliged, at every minute of the day, to take his stand in the face of this poisoning? And as soon as he steps outside, as soon as he meets others in the street or in any public place, and feels upon him the gaze of those whom a Jewish paper calls "Them", with a mixture of fear, of scorn, of reproach, of brotherly love, he must decide: Does he agree or not to be the person he is made to appear? And if he agrees, to what extent? And if he refuses, does he thereby reject all kinship with other Israelites? Or merely an ethnic kinship? Whatever he does, he is launched upon this path. He can choose to be brave or cowardly, sad or gay, as he can choose either

to kill Christians or love them. But he cannot choose not to be a Jew. Or rather, if he chooses to do that, if he asserts that the Jew does not exist, if he denies the Jewish character in himself, violently, desperately, it is precisely in that that he is a Jew. For I, who am not a Jew, have nothing either to deny or to prove, whereas the Jew, if he has decided that his race does not exist, has to *furnish proof*.

To be a Jew is to be flung into, and *abandoned* in, the Jewish situation, and at the same time, to be responsible in and through one's own person for the destiny and the very nature of the Jewish people. For, whatever the Jew may say or do, and whether he is dimly or clearly aware of his responsibilities, everything happens for him as if he had to collate all his actions with an imperative of the Kantian type, everything happens as if he had in every case to ask himself: "If all the Jews acted like me, what would become of the Jewish reality?" And to all the questions he asks himself ("What would happen if all the Jews were Zionists, or if, on the other hand, they were all converted to Christianity, or if all the Jews denied that they were Jews", and so on . . .) he must reply alone and unaided, by choosing what to be himself.

If the reader agrees with us that man is "a freedom within a given situation", then he will easily grasp that this freedom may be defined as authentic or as inauthentic according to the choice it makes of itself within the situation whence it arises. Authenticity, it goes without saying, consists in assuming a lucid and true awareness of the situation, in accepting the responsibilities and risks incurred in that situation, and in main-

taining it in the moment of pride or of humiliation, and sometimes in the moment of abhorrence and hatred. There is no doubt that authenticity demands great courage, and something more than courage. So it is hardly surprising that inauthenticity is the more widespread. Whether it is a question of bourgeois or Christians, the majority are inauthentic, in the sense that they refuse to live fully through their bourgeois or Christian condition, but always conceal certain aspects from themselves. And when the Communists make "the radicalisation of the masses" part of their programme, when Marx points out that the working class *must* become aware of itself, what does that mean, if not that the worker also is first and foremost inauthentic?

The Jew is no exception to this rule: his authenticity comes from living fully his condition of Jew, his inauthenticity from denying it or attempting to evade it. And inauthenticity is doubtless more tempting for him than for other men, because the situation which he must assume and live within is quite simply that of a martyr. What the least fortunate men usually discover in their situation is a bond of concrete solidarity with other men: the economic condition of a salaried worker, lived through in revolutionary perspectives, or that of a member of a church, even of a persecuted one, entails within itself a profound unity of material and spiritual interests. But we have shown that the Jews have between them neither a community of interests nor a community of belief. They have no common homeland, and no history. The only tie which binds them together is the hostile contempt in which

they are held by the communities surrounding them.

Thus the authentic Jew is he who asserts himself in and through the contempt shown towards him; the situation he wishes fully to understand and live within is, in times of social peace, highly elusive: it is an atmosphere, a subtle meaning behind faces and words, a menace which lurks concealed in things, an abstract tie which binds him to other men vastly different from himself. On the other hand, everything conspires to make him look upon himself as an ordinary Frenchman: the prosperity of his business depends closely on that of the country, the fate of his sons is tied up with peace and the greatness of France, the language he speaks and the culture he has received allow him to base his reckonings and reasonings on principles common to a whole nation. He should therefore have merely to go his normal way in order to forget his condition as a Jew, but for the fact that, as we have seen, he encounters everywhere a poison which almost defies analysis—the hostile awareness of others. What is really astonishing is not that there are inauthentic Jews, but that, proportionally, there seem to be fewer than inauthentic Christians. Nevertheless, it is from observing certain patterns of behaviour among inauthentic Jews that the anti-semit has constructed his mythology of the Jew in general. What, in fact, characterises them is that they live their situation by fleeing it; they have chosen either to deny it, or to deny their responsibility, or their state of abandonment, which appears finally intolerable. That does not necessarily mean that they wish to destroy the concept of the Jew, nor that they

explicitly deny the existence of a Jewish reality. But their feelings, gestures and actions are all aimed secretly at destroying this reality.

Inauthentic Jews, in short, are those whom other men regard as Jews, and who have chosen to flee from this unbearable situation. As a result, they follow various modes of conduct, which are not all manifested at the same time in the same person, but each of which may be characterised as a *way of escape*. The anti-semitic has collected and bracketed together all these distinct, and sometimes incompatible, ways of escape, and through them has sketched a monstrous portrait, which he claims to be that of the Jew in general; while, at the same time, he represents these free attempts on the part of the Jew to extract himself from a distressing situation as hereditary traits, entering into his very physical composition, and consequently impossible to modify. But if we wish to see the matter in a true light, the portrait must be taken apart, the "ways of escape" given back their autonomy, and shown as *undertakings* instead of being considered as innate qualities. It must be understood that the nomenclature of these ways of escape applies solely to the *inauthentic* Jew (although the term "*inauthentic*" naturally implies no moral censure), and must be completed by a description of Jewish authenticity. Finally, we must always bear clearly in mind that it is the *situation* of the Jew which must, in all circumstances, be regarded as the key to the matter. If this method has been grasped, and is rigorously applied, perhaps we shall be able to substitute for the great Manichean myth of Israel a few facts more fragmentary but more precise.

What is the primary feature of anti-semitic mythology? It is, we are told, that the Jew is a complicated being, who spends all his time analysing and making subtle distinctions. He is readily accused of perpetually "splitting hairs", without its ever being questioned whether this tendency to analysis and introspection is compatible with the ruthlessness in business dealings and the unscrupulous "careerism" at other times attributed to him. We are prepared to recognise that the choice to take flight entails among certain Jews, for the most part intellectuals, an attitude as often as not due to a conditioned reflex. But here also a point must be made clear. For this conditioned reflex is not inherited: it is a way of escape; and it is we who force the Jew to flee.

Stekel, in company with several other psychoanalysts, talks in this connection of a "Judaic complex". And there are many Jews who themselves mention their inferiority complex. I see no harm in employing this expression, as long as it be understood that the complex is not received from outside, and that the Jew *places himself in a state of complex* when he chooses to live his situation in an inauthentic manner. He has then, in short, allowed himself to be persuaded by the antisemites, and is the first victim of their propaganda. With them, he admits that, *if there is a Jew*, he must have those characteristics which popular ill-will ascribes to him, and he attempts to set himself up as a martyr, in the proper meaning of the word, or, in other words, to prove through *his own person* that there is no such thing as a Jew. The anguish he feels often manifests itself in a special form—as the fear of acting or of

feeling as a Jew. One has heard of these psychasthenics who are haunted by the fear of killing someone, of throwing themselves out of the window, or of letting slip ugly words. Up to a point, even though their distress rarely reaches a pathological level, certain Jews are similar to them: they have let themselves be poisoned by a particular representation others have made of them, and they live in fear that their actions will conform to it.

Thus we can say, in employing again an expression used a little earlier, that their behaviour patterns are perpetually and irrevocably determined from within. Their actions, in fact, are not dictated only by the motives that can be assigned to the actions of non-Jews—such as interests, passion, altruism, etc.—but are also aimed at appearing radically distinct from the actions catalogued as “Jewish”. Many Jews are deliberately generous, disinterested, and even extraordinarily lavish because the Jew is ordinarily regarded as a money-grubber. That does not in any way signify, let us note, that they have to struggle against a “tendency” to avarice. There is no *a priori* reason why the Jew should be more avaricious than the Christian. It means, rather, that their gestures of generosity are poisoned by the decision to be generous. Spontaneity and the deliberately-made choice are here inextricably mixed. The end pursued is the double one of obtaining a certain result in the outside world, and also of proving, to oneself and to others, that there is not a Jewish nature. Thus many inauthentic Jews play at not being Jews. A number of them have related to me the curious reaction they felt after the armistice: the role

of the Jews in the Resistance was admirable, as everyone knows; it was they who, before the Communists entered the struggle, provided the main framework; and during four years, they gave proof of a courage and a spirit of decision to which it is a pleasure to pay tribute. Nevertheless, some of them wavered long before finally "resisting", the Resistance movement striking them as being so much in conformity with the interests of the Jews, that they felt at first reluctant to join it; they wanted to be sure that they were fighting, not *as Jews*, but *as Frenchmen*.

Such a scruple shows clearly enough the particular way their minds work: the Jewish factor constantly intervenes, and they find it impossible to reach a direct decision based purely and simply on an examination of the facts. In short, they have found it natural to put themselves in the sphere of introspection. The Jew, like the timid or scrupulous person, is not content merely to act or to think: he sees himself acting, he sees himself thinking. It must, however, be pointed out that Jewish introspection, not having as its origin a disinterested curiosity or a desire for moral conversion, is in itself *practical*: It is not the man but the *Jew* that the Jews seek to know within themselves through introspection; and they wish to know the Jew *in order to deny him*. For them, it is not a question of recognising certain faults and combating them, but of making clear by their behaviour that they do not possess these faults. In this way is explained the peculiar quality of Jewish irony, which is most often employed at the expense of the Jew himself, and which is a perpetual endeavour to

see himself from the outside. The Jew, because he knows he is watched, takes the initiative and tries to look upon himself with the eyes of the others. This objective attitude towards himself is yet one more ruse arising from inauthenticity: while he contemplates himself with the "detachment" of another person, he feels in fact *detached* from himself; he is another person, a pure witness.

He knows perfectly well, however, that this detachment from the self cannot be effective unless it is ratified by the others. That is why he is frequently found to possess the faculty of assimilation. He absorbs all types of knowledge with an avidity which must not be confused with disinterested curiosity, because he thinks that by digesting all the ideas of men, and by acquiring a human point of view on the universe, he can become "a man", nothing more, merely a man like the rest. He acquires culture in order to destroy the Jew in himself; he would like to be described in a slightly modified form of Terence's line: *Nil humani mihi alienum puto ergo homo sum.*

At the same time, he tries to lose himself among the Christian crowd: as we have seen, the Christians have had the cunning and audacity to allege in the face of the Jew that they are not of *another race*, but purely and simply *man*; and if the Jew is fascinated by the Christians, it is not for their virtues, which he prizes little, but because they represent anonymity, humanity without race. If he attempts to penetrate into the most guarded circles, it is not because of the ruthless ambition he is so often reproached with—or rather, this ambition has only one meaning: the Jew tries to get

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*himself recognised* as a man by other men. If he wants to insinuate himself everywhere, it is because he cannot find peace as long as he remains in a setting which opposes him, and by opposing him, establishes him as a Jew in his own eyes. The principle behind this race to become assimilated is a worthy one: the Jew is claiming his rights as a Frenchman. Unfortunately, the success of his venture is doomed from the start: he wants to be greeted as "a man", and even in those circles into which he has managed to penetrate, it is as a Jew that he is received: he is the rich or powerful Jew with whom "one must mix, after all", or the "good" Jew, the Jew who is an exception, and whom one sees out of friendship and *in spite of* his race. He is not unaware of this, but if he admitted to himself that he was received as a Jew, his venture would become meaningless, and he would lose heart. Thus, he does not act in good faith: he conceals from himself the truth which, nevertheless, he carries in the depths of his being: he wins a position for himself *as a Jew*, he maintains it with the means at his disposal, in other words with his *Jewish* means, but he considers each new conquest as the symbol of one degree higher in assimilation.

It goes without saying that anti-semitism, which is the almost immediate reaction of the circles which he has penetrated, does not leave him long in ignorance of that which he is so anxious to overlook. But the outbursts of the anti-semitic result, paradoxically enough, in spurring the Jew on to conquest of other circles and other groups. This is because, at the root of his ambition, lies the search for security, in the same way as his snobbery—if he is a snob—is an attempt to

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assimilate national values (pictures, books, and so on . . .). Thus he makes a rapid and brilliant progress through all the social layers, but remains like a hard kernel in the milieux which receive him. His assimilation is as brilliant as it is ephemeral. For this he is often blamed: thus, according to a remark by Siegfried, the Americans believe that the origin of their anti-semitism lies in the fact that the Jewish immigrants, outwardly the first to be assimilated, continued to be Jews in the second or third generation. This fact is naturally interpreted as demonstrating that the Jew had no sincere desire for assimilation, and as if, behind an outward show of flexibility, he concealed a deliberate and conscious attachment to the traditions of his race. But exactly the contrary obtains: it is because he is never received as *a man*, but always and everywhere as *the Jew*, that the Jew cannot be assimilated.

From this situation, a fresh paradox arises: which is, that the inauthentic Jew wishes at one and the same time to lose himself in the Christian world, and to remain implanted in a Jewish setting.

Whatever circle the Jew has entered in order to escape from the Jewish reality, he feels that he has been received as a Jew, and that he is continually thought of as such. His life among the Christians knows no rest, and does not provide him with the anonymity he seeks. It is, on the contrary, a perpetual tension. In his flight towards man, he carries always the image which haunts him. It is this which establishes among all Jews a solidarity, which is neither of action nor of interest, but of situation. What binds them more strongly than the sufferings of two thousand years is the present hostility

of Christians. They may try to maintain that it is pure chance which has grouped them in the same districts, the same blocks of flats, the same business enterprises, but there exists among them a strong and complex bond, which it is worth taking the trouble to describe.

The Jew is for the Jew, in fact, the only man with whom he can say "we". And what they all have in common (at least, all inauthentic Jews) is the temptation to say "We are not like other men", the vertigo induced by the opinion of outsiders, and the blind and desperate decision to flee this temptation. When, however, they return to the intimacy of their own homes, by eliminating the non-Jewish onlooker, they eliminate at the same time the Jewish reality. Doubtless, to the few Christians who have entered these interiors, they appear more Jewish than ever, but that is because they abandon themselves; an abandonment which does not mean, however, that they surrender voluptuously to indulging their Jewish "nature", as they are accused of doing, but on the contrary, that they forget it. When the Jews are among themselves, in other words, each one of them is, for the others and consequently for himself, purely and simply a man. Proof of this, if proof were needed, lies in the fact that very often the members of the same family do not notice the ethnic characteristics of their kith and kin (by ethnic characteristics is here meant those hereditary biological attributes which we have accepted as incontestable). I knew a Jewish woman, whose son, somewhere around 1934, had through force of circumstances to make a number of business trips to Nazi Germany. The son had the typical features of

the French Israelite: a curved nose, protruding ears, and so on . . . but when, during one of his absences, concern was expressed over his fate, his mother replied: "Oh! I'm not worrying, he doesn't look a bit like a Jew."

Only, through a dialectic proper to Jewish inauthenticity, this continual looking into the self, this effort to constitute a Jewish immanence in which each Jew, instead of having to bear witness for the others, would merge himself in a collective subjectivity, this effort to wipe out the Christian as a watching eye, in fact all these ruses to *escape* are reduced to nil by the constant and universal presence of the non-Jew. Even in their most intimate gatherings, the Jews might say of him what St John Perse says of the sun: "He is not named, but his presence is among us." They are quite aware that the very propensity they have for associating with each other defines them as Jews in the eyes of the Christian. And when they re-emerge into the full beam of public attention, their solidarity with their co-religionists is branded on them as if with an iron.

The Jew who meets another Jew in the home of a Christian is a little like a Frenchman meeting a compatriot in a foreign country. But the Frenchman takes pleasure in asserting himself as French in the eyes of the world. Not so the Jew, who, if he were the only Israelite in such non-Jewish company, would make every effort not to *feel* Jewish. But since there is another Jew with him, he feels himself in danger, *because of the other*. And he who, a short time before, did not even notice the ethnic characteristics of his sons or nephews, now begins to watch every move of his co-religionist

with the eyes of an anti-semitic, to wait with a mixture of fear and fatalism for any objective indications of their common origin the other may manifest, being so afraid of what the Christians may discover that he hastens to forestall them: an anti-semitic through impatience, and on behalf of the rest. And each Jewish trait he thinks he has uncovered is to him like a stab at the heart, for he seems to discover it also in himself; but out of reach, objective, incurable and final.

It is of little matter, in fact, who *exhibits* his Jewish race: once it has been made manifest, all the efforts of the Jew to deny it become vain. As is well known, the enemies of Israel readily advance in support of their own argument that "there is no one more anti-semitic than the Jew." In actual fact, the anti-semitism of the Jew is a borrowed thing. It arises first of all from his painful obsession of discovering in his relations and friends the faults that he wishes to reject with all his strength. Stekel, in the analysis we have already quoted, notes the following facts: "As far as education and the running of the house are concerned, everything must be done according to orders [of the Jewish husband]. In Society, it is even worse: he watches [his wife, who is being psychoanalysed] every move she makes and criticises her, so that she loses countenance. As a young girl, she was proud, and everyone praised her distinguished and self-confident manner. Now, she is in continual fear and trembling of having done something wrong; she is afraid of the criticism of her husband which she reads in his eyes. . . . *At the slightest blunder, he used to reproach her for behaving in a Jewish manner.*"

One can almost believe one is watching this drama with its two protagonists: the husband critical, almost pedantic, buried in introspection, and reproaching his wife for being Jewish because he is paralysed with the fear of appearing Jewish himself; the wife crushed beneath this pitiless and hostile regard, feeling in spite of herself stuck fast in "Jewishness", having, without understanding why, the presentiment that every gesture she makes and every word she utters, jars and reveals her origin before the world. It is a hell for both of them. But in the anti-semitism of the Jew must also be recognised an attempt to sever himself from the faults attributed to his "race" by making himself their objective witness and their judge.

In exactly the same way, many people judge themselves with a lucid and pitiless severity because, through this severity, they become two people, and in feeling themselves *judges*, escape from their condition of guilty parties. However it may be, the obvious presence in another of this "Jewish reality" which he rejects in himself helps to create in the inauthentic Jew a mystic and prelogical feeling of his liaison with other Jews. This feeling is really the recognition of a *participation*; the Jews "participate" in each other's existence, and the life of each is haunted by the life of the others; and this mystic communion becomes all the stronger the more the inauthentic Jew seeks to deny that he is a Jew.

I need cite only one instance as proof of this: It is a recognised fact that in foreign countries, the prostitutes are frequently French. A Frenchman has never found it very pleasant to encounter a French girl in a brothel

in Germany or the Argentine. All the same, his sense of participation in the national reality is of quite a different type: France, after all, is a *nation*, therefore the patriot can regard himself as belonging to a collective reality whose form is outlined by its economic, cultural and military activity, and if, in addition, certain of the secondary aspects are unpleasant, he can leave them aside.

The reaction of a Jew who meets a Jewish girl under similar conditions is otherwise: in spite of himself, he sees in the humiliated situation of the prostitute a symbol, as it were, of the humiliated situation of Israel. I have heard a number of anecdotes on this score. I will quote only one, because I heard it directly from the person to whom the thing happened. A Jew, going into a brothel, picked out a prostitute and went up with her to her room. She revealed to him that she was Jewish. He was rendered impotent immediately, and soon felt such an overwhelming sense of humiliation that this was swiftly translated into physical terms by violent vomiting. It was not that he found sexual relations with a Jewess repugnant, since, on the contrary, the Jews marry among themselves, but rather the fact of contributing personally to the humiliation of the Jewish race in the person of the prostitute and, in consequence, in his own person: for *he himself* must be, in the long run, the prostituted and humiliated one, he and the whole Jewish people.

Thus, whatever he may do, the consciousness of being Jewish dwells within the inauthentic Jew. At the very moment that he endeavours, through his own behaviour, to belie the traits attributed to him, he thinks he redis-

covers them in others, and thereby finds himself indirectly endowed with them also. He both seeks out and flees from his co-religionists; he asserts that he is only a man, among other men, and like other men; yet for all that, he feels himself compromised by the first person he meets, if that person is a Jew. He is anti-semitic in order to sever all his ties with the Jewish community, and yet he encounters that community once more in the depths of his own heart, for he feels in his own flesh the humiliations other Jews are made to suffer by the anti-semites. And it is precisely this perpetual oscillation between pride and a feeling of inferiority, between a wilful and impassioned denial of the characteristics of their race and a mystic and carnal participation in the Jewish reality, that is a trait of inauthentic Jews.

This painful and inextricable situation may lead a certain few of them to masochism—simply because masochism appears, fleetingly, as a solution, as a sort of respite, a lull. What obsesses the Jew is that he is responsible for himself, like every other man, that he freely commits those actions which he considers worth making, but that, at the same time, a hostile group condemns these actions on every occasion as being tainted with a Jewish character. Thus it seems to him that he makes himself a Jew at the very moment that he tries to flee from the Jewish reality. It seems to him that he is engaged in a struggle, in which he is always vanquished, and in which he makes himself his own enemy; in such degree as he is conscious of being responsible for himself, it seems to him that he has the crushing responsibility of making himself a Jew before the other

Jews and before the Christians. Through him, and in spite of himself, the Jewish reality exists in the world.

Again, masochism is the desire to be treated as an object. Humiliated, despised, or simply neglected, the masochist delights in seeing himself pushed about, handled and utilised like a thing. He tries to reach self-fulfilment as an inanimate thing, and, by so doing, renounces his responsibilities. That which attracts some Jews, weary of struggling against an impalpable Jewishness, for ever denied and smothered, and for ever springing up again, is complete abdication.

In short, although the way to prove oneself authentic may well be to assert oneself as a Jew, they have failed to grasp the fact that authenticity is made manifest through revolt: all they hope is that the scrutiny, the disdain and the antagonism of the rest may constitute them Jews in the same way as a stone is a stone, by attaching to them qualities and a destiny; only thus will they be, for a moment, given relief from the bewitched freedom which is theirs, which allows them no escape from their condition, and whose sole existing purpose seems to be to render them responsible for that which they repel with all their strength.

It must be admitted, however, that this masochism has other causes as well. In a fine and cruelly striking passage of *Antigone*, Sophocles writes: "You have too much pride for one who is in misfortune." One of the essential traits of the Jew, it might be said, is that, unlike Antigone, a centuries-old familiarity with misfortune has made him modest in catastrophe. It is quite wrong to conclude, as is often done, that he is arrogant in success and humble in failure. The truth is quite

otherwise: he has taken to heart the curious counsel that Greek wisdom gave to the daughter of Oedipus, and has realised that modesty, silence and patience are seemly in misfortune, since misfortune is already a sin in the eyes of men. And it is certainly true that such wisdom can turn into masochism, into a taste for suffering. But essentially what remains is the temptation to resign from the self, and to be finally stamped for good with a Jewish nature and destiny, which dispenses with all responsibility and all need to struggle. Thus the anti-semitism and the masochism of the inauthentic Jew represent, in some ways, the two extremes of his endeavour: adopting the first attitude, he goes so far as to abjure his race, in order to remain no more, on purely individual grounds, than a man without blemish in the midst of other men; adopting the second, he abjures his freedom as a man in order to escape from the sin of being a Jew, and to try and regain the peace and the passivity of the object.

But the anti-semitic adds a fresh touch to the portrait: the Jew, he tells us, is an abstract intellectual, a pure rationalist. And it is quite evident that, on his lips, the terms "abstract", "intellectual" and "rationalist" assume a pejorative meaning. It could not very well be otherwise, since the anti-semitic is defined by his concrete and irrational possession of the real wealth of the Nation. But when we remember that rationalism was one of the principal instruments in the liberation of men, we must refuse to look upon it merely as a pure game of abstractions, but must insist, on the contrary, on its creative strength. It was in rationalism that two centuries—and not the least significant—placed their

hope, and from rationalism that emerged the science and their practical application: it was both an ideal and a passion, attempting to reconcile men by revealing to them the eternal truths upon which they might reach agreement; and, in its naïve and engaging optimism, it deliberately confounded Evil with error. Nothing can be understood about Jewish rationalism, if it is seen merely as some abstract taste for argument, instead of for what it really is: a fresh and intense love of mankind.

It is at the same time, nevertheless, a way of escape—I would even say, the royal road of escape. Up to now, in other words, we have been considering Israelites who struggle to deny, in their own person, in their very flesh and blood, their situation as Jews. There are others who select a conception of the world in which the very idea of race can find no place; they too, admittedly, conceal from themselves *the situation of the Jew*; but if they once managed to persuade themselves, and others, that the idea of the Jew is a contradictory one, if they once managed to constitute their vision of the world after such a fashion that they became blind to the Jewish reality, as the colour-blind person is blind to red or green, might they not declare in all good faith that they were “men among men”?

The rationalism of the Jews is a passion: the passion for the Universal. And if they have chosen that passion rather than another, it is to combat the particularising conceptions which make them beings apart. Reason is the most widely shared thing in the world, it belongs to everyone and to no one, and in everyone it is the same. If Reason exists, there is not one French truth and

another German truth, just as there is not one Negro truth and another Jewish truth. There is only one Truth, and he is best who discovers it. In the sight of universal and eternal laws, man is himself universal. There are no longer either Jews or Poles, there are men who live in Poland, and others who are designated on their papers of identity as being "of the Jewish faith", and an agreement is always possible between them as soon as it is related to the universal. The portrait of the philosopher as described by Plato in the "Phaedo" may be recalled: how the awakening of reason in him is the death of the body, of the particular traits of character, and how the philosopher freed from the flesh, pure lover of abstract and universal truth, loses all his singular features in order to become an aspect of the universe.

This liberation from the flesh is exactly what certain Israelites seek. The best way of ceasing to feel Jewish is to reason, for reasoning is valid for all, and may be applied by everyone: there is no such thing as *a Jewish manner* of doing mathematics, thus the Jewish mathematician leaves the flesh and becomes universal man when he reasons. And the anti-semitic who follows his reasoning becomes, despite all his antipathy, his brother.

Thus the rationalism to which the Jew clings so passionately is primarily an ascetic and purifying exercise, an escape into the universal: and in such measure as the young Jew discovers in himself a taste for brilliant and abstract argument, he is like the new-born child which touches its own body in order to know it: he probes and examines his condition of universal man with elation, and achieves, on a higher plane, the

harmony and assimilation which are denied him on the social plane. The choice of rationalism means, for him, the choice of a man's destiny, and of a human nature. That is why it is both true and false to say that the Jew is "more intelligent than the Christian". It would be more correct to say that he has a taste for pure intelligence, that he likes to exercise it on everything and nothing, and that the use he puts it to is not hampered by the innumerable residual taboos which the Christian encounters in himself, nor by a certain type of particularising sensitivity which the non-Jew readily cultivates.

It must also be added that he feels a sort of impassioned imperialism about reason: for he does not wish merely to persuade others that he is in the right, his object is to convince them that rationalism has an absolute and unconditional value. He regards himself as a missionary of the universal: faced with the universality of the Catholic religion, from which he is excluded, he wishes to establish the "catholicity" of the rational, which is both a means of attaining the true, and a spiritual bond among men. It is not by chance that Léon Brunschvicg, the Jewish philosopher, compares the advances of reason with those of *unification* (unification of ideas, unification of men).

The anti-semites blames the Jew for "not being creative", for having "a destructive mind". This absurd accusation (are not Spinoza, Proust, Kafka, Darius Milhaud, Chagall, Einstein, Bergson, all Jews?) has been lent some plausibility by the fact that Jewish intelligence readily takes on a critical function. But here again, it is not a question of an arrangement of brain cells, but of the choice of a weapon. Against the Jew, in

other words, have been ranged the irrational powers of tradition, of race, of a national destiny, of instinct. It is alleged that these forces have created lasting memorials, a culture, a history, practical values, which preserve in themselves much of the irrationality of their causes, and which are accessible only to intuition.

The Israelite defends himself by denying intuition at the same time as the irrational, by exorcising obscure forces, magic, unreason, and everything that cannot be explained on a basis of universal principles, everything which gives any hint of a tendency towards the singular and the exceptional. He mistrusts, on principle, those totalitarian blocs which appear from time to time as products of the Christian mind: he *challenges* them. Doubtless, the word "destructive" may be used in this connection: but what the Jew wishes to destroy is a strictly localised thing, the entirety of those irrational values which have to be apprehended immediately and without warranty. The Jew demands reassurance, a guarantee for everything put forward by his adversary, because in that way he safeguards himself. He mistrusts intuition because it *cannot be questioned* and because, in consequence, it ends by driving men apart. If he reasons and argues with his adversary, it is in order to establish, at the outset, the unity of the mind: before any discussion begins, he hopes for agreement on the principles from which the rest follows. In return for this preliminary agreement, he is prepared to construct a human order founded on the universality of human nature.

The perpetual critical tendency with which he is reproached conceals a naïve love of communion through reason with his adversaries, and the still more naïve

belief that violence is in no way necessary to relationships between men. While the anti-semitic, the Fascist and so on, proceeding from intuitions which are incomunicable, and which they would not have otherwise, must necessarily resort to force in order to impose the enlightenment they are incapable of sharing, the inauthentic Jew hastens to eliminate, through critical analysis, everything likely to hold men apart and drive them to violence—because in any outbreak of violence, he must be the first victim.

I am fully aware that Spinoza, Husserl and Bergson gave a place to intuition in their doctrines, but the doctrines of the first two are *rational*, which means that they are founded on reason, guaranteed by criticism, and have universal truths as their aim. They bear no resemblance to the Pascalian spirit of finesse: and it is just this spirit of finesse, incontestable and moving, founded upon a thousand imperceptible perceptions, that the Jew sees as his worst enemy. As for Bergson, his philosophy presents the curious aspect of an anti-intellectualist doctrine built up entirely by the most reasoning and the most critical intelligence. It is by arguing for and against that he establishes the existence of a pure duration, and of a philosophical intuition; and this intuition, which reveals life or duration in time, is universal insofar as everyone may practise it, and it also relates to the universal since its objects may be named and conceived. I am aware that Bergson affects infinite reluctance before making use of language. But in the end, he agrees to let words play the part of guides, of sign-posts, of partially faithful messengers. What more then, can be asked? And see how much he is at ease in

his argument: read once more the first chapter of the essay on immediate data, the classical criticism of psycho-physiological parallelism, and that of Broca's theory on aphasia. In fact, just as it has been possible to say, with Poincaré, that non-Euclidean geometry was a matter of definition and was born as soon as it was decided to call a certain type of curve straight, for example the circumferences which may be drawn on the surface of a sphere, in the same way the philosophy of Bergson is a rationalism which has elected to employ a particular language. He has chosen, in other words, to use the terms "life", "pure duration", and so on, for that which earlier philosophy named "continuity", and has baptised the comprehension of this continuity, "intuition". As the basis for this comprehension must be laid by research and criticism, and as it seizes upon a universal, and not on incommunicable particular traits, it comes to the same thing to call it irrational *intuition, or a synthetic function of reason*. If—and with good reason—the system of thought of Kierkegaard or Novalis is called irrationalism, we must call Bergson's system a debaptised rationalism. And for my part, I see in this the supreme defence of a persecuted being: to attack in order to defend oneself, to conquer the irrationalism, as such, of the adversary, in other words, to render it harmless and to assimilate it into constructive reason. And as a matter of fact, the irrationalism of Sorel leads straight on to violence, and, in consequence, to anti-semitism, whereas that of Bergson is perfectly inoffensive, and can only help towards universal reconciliation.

In the ordinary way, the democrat is also found to

possess this same universalism and critical rationalism. His abstract liberalism affirms that Jews, Negroes, Chinese, should all have the same rights as the other members of the collectivity, but he demands these rights for them insofar as they are men, and not insofar as they are the concrete and singular products of history. Consequently, certain Jews attract the attention of the democrat. Haunted by the spectre of violence, the unassimilated residue of particularising and bellicose societies, they dream of a contractual community, in which thought itself would be established in the form of a contract—since it would be a dialogue, since those arguing the case would reach agreement on principles at the start—and in which the “social contract” would be the sole collective tie. The Jews are the gentlest of men. They are passionately opposed to violence. And this unfailing gentleness, which they preserve in the midst of the most atrocious persecutions, this sense of justice and reason which they set up as their sole defence against a hostile, brutal and unjust society, is perhaps the best of the message they have to give us, and the true mark of their greatness.

But the anti-semit immediately seizes upon this free attempt by the Jew to live within and dominate his situation; he transforms it into a fixed trait manifesting the incapacity of the Jew to become assimilated. The Jew is no longer a rationalist, but merely an arguer, his quest is not the positive search for the universal, but merely shows his incapacity to grasp vital racial and national values: the spirit of free criticism from which he derives the hope of defending himself against superstitions and myths becomes a Satanic spirit of negation,

a disintegrating virus; and instead of being esteemed as an instrument of self-criticism, spontaneously engendered within the framework of modern societies, he is to be regarded as a permanent danger to nationalities and French values. Rather than to deny the love certain Jews feel for the exercise of Reason, it has seemed to us both more valid and more useful to attempt an explanation of their rationalism.

It is again as an attempted evasion that the attitude a number of them have towards their own bodies must be interpreted. It is a recognised fact that the sole ethnic characteristics of the Jew are physical. The anti-semitic has seized upon this fact, and has transformed it into a myth: he claims to be able to detect his enemy simply at a glance.

The reaction this produces in certain Israelites is to make them deny the body which betrays them. Naturally, the intensity of the denial must vary according to the more or less revealing nature of their physical appearance; but in any case, they do not accept their bodies with the same complacency and the same tranquil feeling of ownership which characterise the greater number of "Aryans". For the latter, their bodies are products of French earth; they possess them by means of the same profound and magic participation which ensures them possession of their soil and their culture. And because they are proud of their bodies, they have attributed to them a certain number of strictly irrational values which are intended to express the ideals of *life* itself and as such. Scheler has rightly called them vital values; they are not, indeed, concerned either with the elementary needs of the body, or with

the demands of the spirit, but with a particular type of blossoming out, a certain biological style which seems to show the intimate functioning of the system, the harmony and independence of the organs, the cellular metabolism, and above all the "scheme of living", the blind yet cunning scheme which is the very meaning of the living finality. Grace, nobility, vivacity, are among these values. It is worth noting that we do, in fact, discern these in the animals themselves: one speaks of the grace of the cat, of the nobility of the eagle.

It is self-evident that people allow a great number of these biological values to enter into the concept of *race*. Is not race itself a pure vital value? And does it not embody, in its essential structure, a judgement of value, since the very idea of race implies that of inequality? If that is so, then the Christian, the Aryan, has a particular feeling for his body: he is not purely and simply aware of the material changes in his organs; the information his body sends him, its appeals and messages, come to him with certain coefficients of ideality, and are always more or less symbolical of vital values. He even devotes part of his activity to discovering those ways of regarding himself which correspond to his vital ideal. The nonchalance of the dandy, the vivacity and "dash" which at certain epochs it has been fashionable to manifest, the ferocious swagger of the Italian Fascist, the grace of women, all these biological behaviour patterns aim at expressing the aristocracy of the body.

To these values are naturally linked certain anti-values, such as disparagement of the *base functions* of

the body, as well as social behaviour patterns and sentiments: modesty, for example. This, in fact, is not only the shame of exhibiting one's nakedness, but also a certain way of looking upon the body as something precious, a refusal to regard it simply as an instrument, a way of hiding it in the sanctuary of the clothes like some object of religious worship.

The inauthentic Jew is stripped by the Christian of his vital values. If his body reminds him of its presence, the concept of race at once seems to poison for him all his intimate sensations. The values of nobility and grace have been monopolised by the Aryans, who withhold them from him. If he accepted these values, he would perhaps be forced to reconsider the notion of ethnic superiority, with all the consequences it implies. In the name of the idea of *universal man*, he refuses to listen to the messages peculiar to himself which his organism sends him; in the name of *rationality*, he repels irrational values and accepts only spiritual values; universality being, for him, at the top of the scale of values, he conceives a sort of *universal and rationalised body*. He does not have the scorn of the ascetic for his body, and does not regard it as a "useless burden" or an "animal", but neither does he regard it in the light of an object of worship: and insofar as he does not forget it, he treats it as an instrument, his sole concern being to adapt it with precision to his own ends. And, just as he refuses to consider the irrational values in life, in the same way he refuses to set up a hierarchy of the natural functions. This refusal has two aims in view: on one hand, it entails the negation of a specific ethnic character for Israel, and on the other, it is an imperialist

and-offensive weapon, aimed at persuading Christians that their bodies are no more than tools. The "lack of modesty" with which the anti-semit hastens to reproach certain Jews has no other origin. It comes, first of all, from a pretence to treat the body rationally. If the body is a mechanism, why place the needs of excretion under a ban? Why exercise continual supervision over it? It must be cared for, cleaned, maintained, without pleasure or love or shame, simply as a machine.

But besides that, beneath this lack of modesty must no doubt be discerned, at least in some cases, a certain despair: what use is it shrouding the nakedness of a body which the gaze of Aryans has undressed once and for all; to be a Jew in their eyes—is that not worse than to be naked? But of course, this rationalism is not the prerogative of the Jews: a number of Christians are to be found—doctors for example—who have adopted the same rational point of view towards their own bodies or those of their children, but in their case it is a conquest, an emancipation which co-exists, in most instances, with many prelogical surviving factors. The Jew, on the other hand, has made no attempt to criticise vital values: he has made himself such that they have no meaning for him. It must also be added, in opposition to the anti-semit, that this bodily uneasiness may produce exactly contrary results, and lead to shame of the body and an extreme modesty. I have heard of many Jews who show far greater modesty than Christians, and who are constantly preoccupied in concealing their body, and of others who are preoccupied in spiritualising it, or in other words—since it is refused possession of vital values

—in clothing it with a spiritual garb. A Christian often finds the face and gestures of certain Jews embarrassing because they *indicate too much*. They express too much and for too long a period, intelligence, goodness, resignation, suffering.

It is customary to poke fun at the rapid and, if I may use the word, voluble gestures the Jew makes with his hands when he is speaking. Although, in point of fact, this vivacious mimicry is less wide-spread than people claim. But the most important thing is to distinguish it from other forms of mimicry which bear an outward resemblance to it, as, for example, that of the Marseillais. With the Marseillais, his rapid, passionate, inexhaustible mimicry goes with an inner fire, a constant nervous tension, and the desire to render with his whole body whatever he may see or feel. The Jew is desirous, above all, of being totally significant, of feeling his physical system as a symbol in the service of an idea, of transcending the body which weighs him down and reaching the objects or the truths revealed to his reason. Let it however be added that any description, where such delicate matters are concerned, must be accompanied with much caution and reserve: what we have just said is not applicable to all inauthentic Jews, and above all, has a variable importance in the general attitude of the Jew, according to his education, his origin and above all, his behaviour taken as a whole.

It seems to me that the celebrated Jewish "lack of tact" may well be explained in the same fashion. This accusation naturally contains a considerable amount of plain ill-will. The fact remains, that what we call "tact" arises from the "spirit of finesse", and that

the Jew mistrusts the spirit of finesse. To act with tact is to sum up a situation at a glance, to accept it synthetically, to feel it rather than to analyse it; but it means, at the same time, to shape one's conduct by referring to a host of indistinct principles, some of which are concerned with vital values, and others with giving expression to entirely irrational traditions of good breeding and polite ceremonial. Thus, an action carried out "with tact" implies that its author holds a certain traditional, synthetic and ritual conception of the world; one cannot *give a reason for* such an action; it implies, as well, a particular feeling for psychological ensembles, is in no sense *critical*, and, finally, can only have full significance in a strictly defined community which possesses its own ideals, morals and customs. The Jew has as much natural tact as anyone else, if by that is understood original apprehension of the Other Person; but he does not *seek* to have tact.

To consent to base one's behaviour on tact would be to recognise that reason is not a sufficient guide in human relationships, and that tradition and the obscure forces of intuition may be superior to it when it is a question of adapting oneself to men, or of handling them; it would be to admit a casuistry, a morality of particular instances, and hence, to abandon the idea of a universal human nature, demanding universal treatment; it would mean admitting that concrete situations are not capable of being compared, as concrete individuals are not; it would mean turning to particularisation. But once the Jew accepts that, he seals his own fate: for, in the name of tact, the anti-semitic denounces him as a particular case, and excludes him

from the national community. There exists in the Jew, therefore, a marked inclination to believe that the worst difficulties are capable of being resolved by reason; he cannot *see* what is irrational and magical, the concrete and particular nuance; he does not *believe* in the unique nature of feelings: through a very understandable defensive reaction, this man, who lives by the opinion other men have of him, tries to deny the value of opinion, and is tempted to apply to men the reasonings applicable to things; he adopts some of the analytical rationalism of the engineer and the worker: not because he is formed or attracted by things, but because he is repulsed by men. And the analytical psychology he builds up readily substitutes for the synthetic structures of awareness the play of interests, the composition of appetites, and the algebraic sum of tendencies. The art of dominating, charming and persuading becomes a rational calculation. Only it goes without saying that the explanation of human behaviour patterns by universal notions may easily lead to abstraction.

It is, in fact, through the taste for abstraction that may be understood the special relationship between the Jew and money. The Jew is fond of money, we are told. Nevertheless, the collective consciousness which depicts him often enough as greedy for profit rarely confounds him with the other popular myth of the Miser, and the anti-semitic even finds a favourite theme of imprecation in the bountiful prodigality of the Jew. If the Jew loves money at all, in actual fact, it is not through any specific taste for pounds, shillings and pence: his money is often held in the abstract form of stocks and shares, cheques or banking accounts. He has no fondness, there-

fore, for its tangible representation, but for its abstract form. In reality, it is a question of buying power. And if he prefers this form of ownership to all others, it is merely because it is universal. Buying, as a mode of appropriation, does not, in fact, depend on the race of the buyer, and does not vary according to his idiosyncrasies; the *price* of the object refers to *any* purchaser, who is defined solely by the fact that he possesses the sum marked on the ticket. And once the sum has been paid, the purchaser is legally the owner of the object. Thus, ownership through purchase is an abstract and universal form of ownership, as distinct from a peculiar and irrational appropriation through participation.

Herein lies a vicious circle: the richer the Jew, the more the traditionalist anti-semitic will tend to insist on the fact that true ownership is not legal ownership, but an adaptation of body and mind to the thing possessed; in this way, as we have seen, the poor man retrieves both French soil and French spiritual riches. Anti-semitic literature is strewn with proud replies addressed to the Jews by virtuous orphans or aged and ruined noblemen, the substance of which is that honour, love, virtue, taste and so on "cannot be bought". But the more the anti-semitic dwells on this kind of appropriation which aims at shutting the Jew out from the community, the more the Jew is tempted to assert that the sole mode of ownership is legal ownership acquired through purchase. Antagonised by this magical possession, which is denied him, and which seeks to rob him even of the objects he has bought, he clings to money as being the legitimate power of appropriation of the universal and anonymous man he would like to be. If he lays stress on the

power of money, it is in order to defend his consumer's rights in a community which challenges them, and at the same time to rationalise the tie between the possessor and the object possessed, in such a way as to make ownership enter into the framework of a rational conception of the universe. Purchase, indeed, as a rational commercial action, makes ownership legitimate, and the latter is defined merely as a right to use. At the same time, the *value* of the object acquired, instead of appearing as some mystic *mana*<sup>1</sup> only to be revealed to the initiated, is identified with its price, which is advertised and can be ascertained at once by anyone.

Now may be seen all that lies behind the Jew's taste for money: if money defines value, the latter is universal and rational, therefore does not emanate from obscure social sources, but is accessible to all: on such a basis, the Jew cannot be excluded from Society; he is an integral part of it, as a purchaser and as an anonymous consumer. Money is a factor of integration. And to the fine formulas of the anti-semitic, "Money isn't everything," or "There are some things that cannot be bought," he may sometimes reply, affirming the omnipotence of money: "Every man can be bought, if the price is high enough." This implies neither cynicism nor a debased viewpoint: it is simply a counter-attack. He wants to convince the anti-semitic that irrational values are a pure pretence, that there is no one who is not ready to turn them into cash. If the anti-semitic lets himself be bought, the matter is proved, since it shows that he too, at heart, prefers legal acquisition

<sup>1</sup> "Manā" is a word used by natives of Melanesia, meaning "occult power". (Trans.)

through purchase to mystic acquisition through participation. At that moment the Jew returns to anonymity; he is no longer anything but universal man, defined solely by his buying power.

In this way, both the "greed for profit" of the Jew, and his real generosity are explained. His "love of money" merely demonstrates his deliberate decision to consider valuable only those rational, universal and abstract relationships which man maintains with things; the Jew is utilitarian because opinion withholds from him every mode of possession of things other than through *use*. At the same time, he wishes to acquire through money the social rights which are denied him on individual grounds. He is not shocked to find himself loved for his money: the respect and adulation that his riches procure are addressed to the anonymous being who possesses such and such buying power; and this is exactly the anonymity he is looking for: paradoxically enough, he wants to be rich *to slip by unnoticed*.

These indications should enable us to trace the principal characteristics of Jewish sensibility. This, as may be imagined, is deeply imprinted with the choice that the Jew makes of himself and of the meaning of his situation. But we are not concerned here with drawing a portrait. We will therefore confine ourselves to invoking the infinite patience of the Jew, and the anticipation of persecution, the foreboding of catastrophe which he tries to conceal from himself all through the flourishing years, but which springs up again as soon as the sky darkens, assuming the form of a prophetic *aura*; we will note the particular nature of his

humanism, his urge towards universal fraternity which struggles against the most stubborn attempts at particularisation, and the extraordinary mixture of love, scorn, admiration and mistrust he feels for the very people who want nothing to do with him.

But do not imagine that it is sufficient to approach him with open arms, in order to win his confidence: he has learned to discern anti-semitism beneath the most ostentatious demonstrations of liberalism. He is as full of mistrust for the Christians as are the workers for the young bourgeois who "go down to the people". His utilitarian psychology leads him to seek out, behind the tokens of sympathy which some people shower upon him, the play of interests, the calculation, the comedy of tolerance. And he is rarely taken in. But for all that, he searches passionately for these tokens of sympathy, and cherishes the very honours which he mistrusts; he wants to be on the other side of the barrier, with and among the others, and nurtures the impossible dream of being suddenly healed by open affection and by obvious proofs of good will of the universal suspicion cast upon him.

And this is the world we have to describe, a world with two poles and a humanity split into two, as we must also show that each Jewish sentiment is of a different quality, according to whether it is directed at a Christian or a Jew: the love of a Jew for a Jewess is different by nature to the love he feels for an "Aryan" girl; there is a deep-seated duality in the Jewish sensibility, which is concealed beneath the externals of a universal humanism. We must note, finally, the open freshness and the unsophisticated spontaneity of Jewish

feelings. Entirely absorbed as he is in rationalising the world, the inauthentic Jew is doubtless able to *analyse* his affections, but he cannot cultivate them; it is possible for him to be a Proust, but not a Barrès. This is because the cultivation of the feelings and of the ego presupposes a profound traditionalism, a taste for the particular and the irrational, a resorting to empirical methods, and the tranquil enjoyment of deserved privileges: and these are the principal factors in an aristocratic sensibility. Having taken these for granted, the Christian is at pains to treat himself like some costly, exotic plant, or like those barrels of fine wine which used to be sent to India and brought back again to France, simply because the sea air penetrated them and gave to the wines they contained a matchless flavour. The cultivation of the ego is altogether magical and comes from participation, but such ceaseless turning inward of the attention does bear some fruit in the end.

The Jew who flees from himself, and regards psychological processes as mechanical agencies rather than the full development of an organism, no doubt witnesses the play of his inclinations, since he has placed himself on the introspective plane, but he does not direct them, and is not even certain that he grasps their true meaning: introspective analysis is not the best instrument for psychological survey. Thus the rationalist is unceasingly overwhelmed by a fresh and turbulent host of passions and emotions. He combines brute feelings with the refinements of intellectual culture. There is a sincerity, a youthfulness and warmth, in the Jew's manifestations of friendship, which are rarely to be found with a Christian, stuck fast in his traditions and ceremonies. It

is also this which gives their defenceless character to Jewish sufferings, which are more shocking to the beholder than any others. But it is not within our scope to insist on this. To have indicated the possible consequences of Jewish inauthenticity is enough.

In conclusion, we will merely point out the main aspects of what is called Jewish *anxiety*. For the Jews are often anxious. An Israelite is never sure of his position or his possessions; he cannot even affirm that he will still be to-morrow in the same country that he inhabits to-day. His situation, his powers, and even his right to live, may at any moment be called into question; besides which, he is, as we have seen, haunted by the elusive and humiliating image that he bears in the eyes of hostile mobs. His history is that of a wandering of twenty centuries; and at each moment he must be ready to take up his staff again and go. Ill at ease to his very marrow, the unreconciled enemy of his own body, and pursuing the impossible dream of an assimilation which becomes more wraith-like the more he tries to draw near to it, he never knows the unruffled security of the "Aryan" solidly established on his estates, and so certain of his title to ownership that he can even afford to forget he is a possessor, and find purely *natural* the link which binds him to his country.

It must not, however, be thought that Jewish anxiety is metaphysical. It would be wrong to liken it to the anguish which contemplation of the human situation inspires in us. I have no hesitation in saying that metaphysical anxiety is a luxury that the Jew cannot, at the present time, allow himself, any more than can the worker. One has to be sure of one's rights, and deeply

rooted in the world, feeling none of the fears which daily assail the oppressed minorities and classes, to indulge in self-interrogation on man's place in the world and his destiny. In other words, metaphysics are the prerogative of the Aryan ruling classes. These remarks must not be interpreted as an attempt to discredit metaphysics: they will become once more the essential preoccupation of man when men have freed themselves.

The anxiety the Jew feels is not metaphysical, but social. It is not yet the place of man in the world that is the usual object of his concern, but his place in society: he cannot perceive the abandonment of each individual in the midst of a silent universe, because he has not yet emerged from society into the world. It is among men that he feels himself abandoned; the racial problem shuts in his horizon. Neither is his anxiety of the type that wishes to be perpetuated. He derives no pleasure from it. He wants to be reassured. It has been pointed out to me that there has been no Jewish surrealist in France. That is because surrealism, in its own way, posits the question of human destiny. The mission it set itself of demolition, and the great fuss it built up about that mission, were the expensive fun and games of young and well-to-do bourgeois in a victorious country which belonged to them. The Jew has no desire to destroy, nor to consider the human situation in its nudity. He is the *social man* above all others, because his torment is social. It was society, not a decree of God, which made him a Jew, and society which gave birth to the Jewish problem. And, since he is forced to make the choice of himself as a whole within perspectives defined by this problem, it is in and through the

social that he chooses his very existence; his constructive aim of integrating himself within the national community is a social one, the effort that he makes to think of himself—or, in other words, to situate himself—among other men, is social, and social his joys and tribulations: but that is simply because the curse which weighs upon him is social too. If, in consequence, he is blamed for his metaphysical inauthenticity, and if it is pointed out that his perpetual anxiety is accompanied by a radical positivism, it must not be forgotten that these reproaches rebound upon those who have made them: the Jew is social because the anti-semitic has made him so.

This, then, is what we have seen—a man hunted down, condemned to make his choice of self on a basis of false problems and within a false situation, deprived of a metaphysical sense by the threatening hostility of the society which surrounds him, and driven back upon a rationalism of despair. His life is merely one long flight from the others and from himself. He has been alienated even from his own body, his emotional life has been split in two, and he has been reduced to pursuing, in a world which rejects it, the impossible dream of universal brotherhood. Whose fault is it? It is our eyes which mirror back at him the image he cannot accept and wishes to conceal from himself. It is our words and our actions—all our words and all our actions, our anti-semitism, certainly, but also, and just as much, our condescending liberalism—which have poisoned him to the very marrow; it is we who force him to *choose himself as a Jew*, and whether he flees or whether he stands up for himself, it is we who have impaled him

upon the dilemma of Jewish inauthenticity or authenticity. We have created this species of men, which has no meaning except as an artificial product of a capitalist (or feudal) society, whose only object is to serve as a scapegoat to a still prelogical collectivity. And this species of men, which *bears witness for man* more than all others, because it has been engendered by secondary reactions within humanity itself, is the quintessence of man, the unlucky, the uprooted, doomed by origin to inauthenticity or to martyrdom. In these circumstances, there is not one of us who is not totally guilty and even a criminal; the Jewish blood shed by the Nazis is upon the heads of all of us.

The fact remains, it will be said, that the Jew is free: he can choose to be authentic. That is true, but we must understand first of all that *that is not our business*: the captive is always free to escape, if it be understood that he risks death crossing the barbed wire; does that make his gaoler any less guilty? Jewish authenticity consists in choosing one's self *as a Jew*, in other words, in fulfilling one's Jewish condition. The authentic Jew abandons the myth of universal man: he knows himself and wills his place in history as a historic and damned being: he ceases then to flee, and to feel ashamed of his kind. He has come to understand that society is bad; so for the naïve monism of the inauthentic Jew he substitutes a social pluralism; he knows that he is *apart*, untouchable, reviled, exiled, and it is *as such* that he asserts himself. Only then, at last, does he abandon his rationalist optimism; he sees that the world is split up into irrational divisions, and by accepting this splitting up—at least where it concerns

him—and by proclaiming himself a Jew, he makes certain of these values and divisions his own; he chooses his brothers and his equals, who are the other Jews; he takes the side of human greatness, since he consents to live in a condition whose definition is that it is unliveable-in, and since he draws pride from his humiliation. He strips anti-semitism of all power and all virulence at the very moment that he ceases to be passive.

For the inauthentic Jew was fleeing from his Jewish reality, and it was the anti-semitic who made him a Jew in spite of himself; whereas the authentic Jew *makes himself a Jew* by himself and of his own accord against all comers, against the whole world: he consents to everything, even martyrdom, and the anti-semitic, disarmed, has to content himself with snarling at his heels without being able to touch him. At once, the Jew, like every authentic man, escapes classification: the common characteristics which we discerned among the inauthentic Jews emanated from their common inauthenticity. We will find none of them in the authentic Jew: he is what he makes himself, and that is all one can say. In consenting to his abandonment, he discovers himself a man once more, a whole man, with the metaphysical horizons which the human condition comprises.

Men of good will, however, will not achieve mental tranquillity merely by saying: "Well, then, if the Jew is free, let him be authentic, and we will have some peace." The choice of authenticity is not a social solution to the Jewish problem: it is not even an individual solution. Doubtless, authentic Jews are much more numerous to-day than is generally supposed. The suffer-

ings they have undergone in the past few years have helped in no small measure to open their eyes, and it even seems probable to me that there are more authentic Jews than authentic Christians. But the choice they have made of themselves does not make their individual activity easier, but rather the contrary.

Here is the case of an "authentic" French Jew who, after having taken part in the fighting in 1940, later directed a French propaganda review in London during the occupation. He wrote under a pseudonym because he wanted to avoid giving anxiety to his "Aryan" wife, who remained in France. This was what many other French émigrés did; and in their case, it was considered perfectly sound behaviour. But in his case, his right to do so was denied. People said: "You see, there's another dirty Jew trying to conceal his origin." He chose those articles which he published solely with regard to merit. If, quite by chance, the proportion of Jewish articles was fairly high, the readers began to sneer and he received letters, saying: "So the whole family's back in the business again." If, on the other hand, he refused a Jewish article, it was said that he was "pretending to be anti-semitic". It may be answered: Very well, since he was authentic, he could have snapped his fingers at it. That is easily said: but he could not snap his fingers at it, precisely because *he was engaged in propaganda*: and depended therefore upon public opinion. "Very well, then it seems that this sort of activity is closed to the Jews; he should have kept out of it." And there we are, back where we started: you would accept authenticity if it led straight to the ghetto. And it is you who refuse to see in it a solution to the problem.

In a social sense, furthermore, matters are no better: the circumstances which we have created are such that authenticity ends by sowing dissension among the Jews. The choice of authenticity may, in fact, lead to opposed political decisions. The Jew may choose an authentic self by claiming his place as a Jew, with his rights and his martyrdom, in the French community; he may feel determined before all else to prove that the best way for him to be a Frenchman is to proclaim himself a *French Jew*.

But he may also be led through his choice to demand a Jewish nation possessing land and autonomy; he may persuade himself that Jewish authenticity demands that the Jew be supported by an Israelite community. It is not impossible to conceive of these two opposed choices being reconciled, and complementing each other as two manifestations of Jewish reality. But for that to happen, it would be necessary for the actions of the Jews not to be scrutinised, and not to run the perpetual risk of supplying their adversaries with weapons against them.

If we had not made for the Jew *his situation* as a Jew, there would always be, in short, the possibility of an option between Jerusalem and France; the vast majority of French Israelites would choose to remain in France, and a small number would go to swell the Jewish nation in Palestine; which would in no way mean that the Jew absorbed into the French collectivity would preserve links with Tel Aviv; at most, Palestine could represent in his eyes a sort of ideal value and a symbol, and the existence of an autonomous Jewish community would be infinitely less dangerous for the integrity of French society than that, for instance, of an ultramontane clergy, which we tolerate with perfect ease.

But present-day mental attitudes make of so legitimate an option a source of conflict between the Jews. In the eyes of the anti-semitic, the setting up of a Jewish nation supplies the proof that the Jew is out of place in the French community. Hitherto, he was blamed for his race; now he is considered as coming from a foreign country; he has no business to be among us, therefore let him go to Jerusalem. In this way, authenticity, when it leads to Zionism, is harmful to the Jews who wish to remain in their original home country, because it furnishes the anti-semitic with arguments. The French Jew is angered by the Zionist, whose entry complicates a situation already so delicate, and the Zionist grows angry with the French Jew, whom he accuses *a priori* of inauthenticity. Thus, the choice of authenticity emerges as a *moral* decision, bringing certitude to the Jew on the ethical plane, but quite incapable of furnishing a solution on the social and political plane: the situation of the Jew is such that everything he does turns against him.

## IV

NATURALLY, it is not claimed that what we have just been saying will lead to a solution of the Jewish problem. But it is not impossible to outline, starting from these premises, the conditions in which a solution can be envisaged. We have seen, at any rate, that contrary to a widely-held belief, it is not the Jewish character which provokes anti-semitism, but, on the contrary, that it is the anti-semitic who creates the Jew. The primary phenomenon is thus anti-semitism, a regressive social construction and a prelogical conception of the world. That being postulated, what is needed? It must be observed, in short, that the solution of the problem entails the definition both of the end to be achieved and the means of achieving it. It often happens that we discuss means without being certain of the end.

What can one hope for, in fact? Assimilation? But this is a dream: the true opponent of assimilation, as we have shown, is not the Jew, but the anti-semitic. Since his emancipation, that is to say for the past century and a half, the Jew has been exercising all his ingenuity in order to get himself accepted by a society which rejects him. It would thus be futile to bring influence to bear upon him to hasten this integration, which always retreats before him: as long as there is anti-semitism, assimilation cannot be achieved. There has been some notion, it is true, of employing sweeping measures: certain Jews themselves demand that all the Israelites

be debaptised and forced to call themselves Durand or Dupont. But such measures would not be enough: a policy of mixed marriages would have to be added, and a rigorous ban laid upon religious practices, in particular upon circumcision.

I do not hesitate to say that these measures strike me as inhuman. It may be a fact that Napoleon thought of resorting to them: but Napoleon's aim was exactly that of sacrificing the person to the community. No democracy can consent to bring about the integration of the Jews at the price of this coercion. Besides, such a proceeding could only be extolled by inauthentic Jews, suffering a crisis of anti-semitism; it has no less an aim than the liquidation of the Jewish race; it represents, driven to an extreme, the tendency we noted in the democrat purely and simply to suppress the Jew for the benefit of *the man*. But *the man* does not exist: there are Jews, Protestants and Catholics, Frenchmen, Englishmen and Germans, whites, blacks and yellows. What is here entailed, in short, is the annihilation of a spiritual community founded upon customs and affection, for the benefit of a national collectivity. The majority of enlightened Jews will refuse assimilation, if it is presented to them in this aspect. Of course, they dream of becoming integrated into the nation, *but as Jews*, and who will dare blame them for it? They have been forced to think themselves Jews, they have been led to awareness of their fellowship with the other Jews; is there any cause for surprise in the fact that they now reject any measures which tend to destroy Israel?

It is futile to protest that they form a nation within the nation. We have tried to show that the Jewish com-

munity is neither national nor international, neither religious, nor ethnic, nor political: it is a quasi-historical community. What makes the Jew is his concrete situation; what binds him to other Jews is the identity of situation. Such a semi-historical body can in no way be considered a foreign element in society. On the contrary, it is necessary to it. If the Church tolerated its existence, at a time when the Church was all-powerful, it was because it took on certain economic functions which rendered it indispensable. At the present day, these functions are open to all, but that does not mean that the Jew, as a spiritual factor, does not help to give the French nation its particular character and its equilibrium.

We have described, objectively and perhaps severely, the traits of the inauthentic Jew: there is not one of them which prevents his assimilation *as such* in the national society. On the contrary, his rationalism, his critical spirit, his dream of a contractual society and a universal fraternity, his humanism, make him a sort of indispensable leaven for this society. What we are proposing now is a concrete liberalism. What is meant by that is that all individuals who collaborate, through their work, in the greatness of a country, have the full rights of a citizen in that country. What gives them this right is not the possession of a problematic and abstract "human nature", but their active participation in the life of society.

This means, therefore, that the Jews, just like the Arabs or the Negroes, as soon as they play a full part in the national life, have the right to review this life: they are citizens. But they have these rights *by virtue*

*of being* Jews, Negroes or Arabs, in other words, as concrete individuals. In communities in which women have the vote, feminine electors are not asked to change their sex on approaching the polling booth: the woman's vote is worth strictly the same as the man's, but it is as a woman that she votes, with her woman's passions and worries, and with her woman's character. When it is a question of the legal rights of the Jew, and of those more obscure, but just as indispensable, rights which are not written in any legal code, it is not insofar as there is a potential Christian in him that his rights should be recognised, but insofar as he is a French Jew: it is with his character, his customs, his tastes, his religion if he has one, his name and his physical traits that we *must* accept him. And if this acceptance is whole-hearted and sincere, it will, first of all, make it easier for the Jew to choose authenticity, and then, gradually, will make possible without violence, in the natural course of history, the assimilation it was hitherto thought could be obtained only by constraint.

But the concrete liberalism we have just defined is an end; and there is a strong danger of its becoming merely an ideal, if we do not decide upon the means of achieving it. However, as we have demonstrated, it cannot be a question of bringing influence to bear upon the Jew. The Jewish problem is engendered by anti-semitism; therefore, it is anti-semitism which must be suppressed in order to resolve it. So it comes back to this: how can influence be exerted upon anti-semitism? Ordinary methods, and particularly education and propaganda, are far from negligible: it would be admirable if children could receive at school an education

which helped them to avoid impassioned error. It is to be feared, nevertheless, that the results obtained might be purely individual. In the same way, there should be no hesitation in forbidding by permanent laws any statements or actions tending to throw discredit on to one category of Frenchmen. But we should be under no illusion as to the efficacy of such measures: laws have not yet hampered the anti-semitic, who is conscious of belonging to a mystic society beyond the legal pale, and never will. Decrees and interdicts may be passed in ever greater number: they will always emanate from the legal France, while the anti-semitic claims to represent the real France.

Let it be remembered that anti-semitism is a primitive and Manichean conception of the world, in which hatred of the Jew plays a part as a vast explanatory myth. We have seen that it is not a question of one isolated point of view, but of a world-embracing choice that a man in his situation makes of himself and of the meaning of the universe. It is the expression of a certain primitive and mystical concept of landed property. If we wish to make this choice impossible, it is not enough to appeal through propaganda, education or legal prohibitions to *the freedom* of the anti-semitic. Since he is, like every other man, a freedom within a situation, it is his situation which must be changed from top to bottom: it is enough, in other words, to change the perspectives of the choice, in order for the choice to be transformed; and this does not mean an attack on freedom, but that freedom is determined on other bases and in relation to other structures. Politics can never exert an influence over the liberty of citizens, and are,

by their function, prevented from concerning themselves with it in any but a negative fashion, in other words, by taking care not to impede such liberty; their only influence is upon situations.

We have established that anti-semitism is an impassioned attempt to achieve a national unity *against* the class division of communities. This means an endeavour to suppress the splitting up of the community into groups hostile to one another by inflaming common passions to such a temperature that they cause all barriers to melt. But since, meanwhile, the divisions remain, since their economic and social causes have not been touched, the aim becomes one of collecting them all together into one whole: and the distinctions between rich and poor, between working and ruling classes, between legal authority and occult authority, between town-dwellers and country-dwellers, and so on, are all summed up in the distinction between the Jew and the non-Jew. Which means that anti-semitism is a mythical and bourgeois way of representing the class struggle, and that it could not exist in a classless society. It demonstrates the *separation* of men, and their isolation in the midst of the community, the conflict of interests and the splitting up of passions: it can exist only in those collective bodies in which pluralities of strong internal structure are bound in loose alliance; it is a phenomenon of social pluralism. In a society whose members were all united, because all engaged upon the same undertaking, there would be no place for it.

Finally, it demonstrates a certain liaison of a mystical and participatory character between man and what he "possesses", which results from present methods of

ownership. Thus, in a classless society founded upon collective ownership of the instruments of labour, and when man, delivered from the delusions of the old world, has at last plunged into *his* undertaking, anti-semitism will no longer have any reason to exist: it will have been destroyed at the root. Thus, the authentic Jew who thinks of himself as a Jew because the anti-semitic has placed him in the situation of a Jew is no more opposed to assimilation than the worker who becomes aware that he belongs to a class is opposed to the liquidation of classes. In both cases, exactly the contrary applies, and it is through a dawning of awareness that suppression of the struggle between classes, and of racism, may be hastened on. It is simply that the authentic Jew renounces *for himself* an assimilation which is not possible at the present time, but waits for it to come for his sons, through the radical elimination of anti-semitism. The Jew to-day is in a state of war. Which is simply another way of saying that the socialist revolution is necessary and sufficient to suppress the anti-semitic; we are staging that revolution for the Jews' sake *as well*.

But in the meantime? For after all, it is a lazy man's solution to bank on the coming revolution and to leave to it the task of resolving the Jewish question. The question, on the contrary, has an immediate bearing on us all; we are all the allies of the Jew, since anti-semitism leads straight to National-Socialism. And if we do not respect the person of the Israelite, who is going to respect us? If we are conscious of these dangers, if we have experienced with a sense of shame our involuntary complicity with the anti-semites, which made execu-

tioners of us, perhaps then we will realise that we must fight for the Jew neither more nor less than we must fight for ourselves.

I am told that a Jewish league against anti-semitism has just been revived. I am delighted to hear it: it proves that the sense of authenticity is growing among the Jews. But can such a league be really effective? Many Jews—and some of the best of them—hesitate to join it through a sort of modesty: "Now it's really become a business," one of them said to me recently. And he added, rather awkwardly, but with a sincere and profound modesty: "Anti-semitism and persecution don't really matter." This reluctance is easily understandable. But need *we* share it, who are not Jews? Richard Wright, the Negro writer, said recently: "There is no black problem in the United States, only a white problem." And we can say, in the same way, that anti-semitism is not a Jewish problem: it is *our* problem. Since we are not the guilty ones, but since we also run the risk of being the victims, we have to be very blind not to see that it is essentially our own concern. It is not up to the Jews, in the first place, to create a militant league against anti-semitism, it is up to us.

It goes without saying that such a league will not eliminate the problem. But if it spread its ramifications throughout France, if it succeeded in being officially recognised by the State, if its existence gave rise, in other countries, to other similar leagues with which it could unite in order ultimately to form an international association, if it acted to good effect in every case in which injustice had been disclosed, and if it exerted

influence through the Press, and by propaganda and education, it would achieve a threefold result: first, it would allow the opponents of anti-semitism to count their numbers and unite in an active group; secondly, through the force of attraction which an organised group always exerts, it would be a rallying point for a great many waverers who have *no* ideas about the Jewish question; and finally, to an adversary who wilfully sets up the real country against the legal country, it would present the image of a concrete community engaged, beyond the universalist abstraction of legality, in a particular struggle. Thus it would rob the anti-semitic of his favourite argument, which rests upon the myth of the concrete.

The cause of the Israelites would already be half won, if only their friends found in their defence a little of the passion and the perseverance that their enemies devote to their destruction. To awaken this passion, it is useless to appeal to the generosity of the Aryans: among the best, that is a fast-disappearing virtue. But it may well be pointed out to each that the fate of the Jews is *his* fate. No Frenchman will be free as long as the Jews do not enjoy their rights to the full. No Frenchman will be secure as long as a Jew, not only in France, but in *the world at large*, need go in fear for his life.

